



Revamp at centre to include new logo

A SHOPPING centre in Stourbridge will be given a facelift including a new logo, revamped signs and refurbished units, bosses announced today.

The work at the Ryemarket comes as a major regeneration project in the town centre moves closer to completion. Managers today said they wanted to 'rebrand and refresh' the centre to complement the redevelopment work taking place.

The Crown Centre scheme will include a Tesco supermarket and shop units. It is due to be completed by Christmas. A planning application for work at the Ryemarket shopping centre has now been lodged with Dudley Council.

The work includes installing new banner signs at the High Street and Market Street entrances and a totem pole with retailers' names on, which will stand in Fountain Square.

It is expected to start in the next couple of weeks and to be completed by the end of the month. Centre manager Kelley Dyas said: "With so much positive investment happening throughout the town, we felt that now is the right time to update The Ryemarket brand."

The former O2 shop and the old butcher's shop will be refurbished to turn them into attractive units which will need little or minimum work when new tenants move in.

Kick-off to help causes

Councillors and council staff will battle it out in a football tournament in Dudley in aid of charity.

Elected members will take on council officers during a six-a-side tournament at Redhill School in Stourbridge on August 15. The players will compete on behalf of Team DB, which is Dudley Council's sports team that raises funds for charity throughout the year.

All money raised on the evening will go to the Mayor of Dudley, Councillor Alan Finch's chosen charities.

HIPPODROME GETS STAY OF EXECUTION

We've won the battle, but not the war



Garry Sawers and Friends of Dudley Hippodrome show their joy at putting the future of the site on the agenda

CAMPAIGNERS bidding to save Dudley Hippodrome from demolition declared they had 'won the battle but not yet the war' after councillors deferred making a decision on its future.

Delighted supporters today welcomed the news, saying it would give them more time to put forward their case for reopening the former theatre. Councillors agreed to delay deciding

on a planning application by the council to demolish the landmark building in Castle Hill to get more information on the group's plans.

The Friends of Dudley Hippodrome group wants to reopen the venue so it can stage West End-style shows and theatre workshops for youngsters and adults.

Chairman Geoff Fitzpatrick said today he was pleased the Hippodrome

had been given a stay of execution but said the group wouldn't rest on its laurels.

"This does not mean the fight is over by any means but it does give us more time to put forward our case in even more detail than before," he said. "There are things we still have to work on."

"We have won a battle but we have not yet won the war. The fight goes on."

DUDLEY Hippodrome has been given a stay of execution, to the delight of campaigners who are battling to save it from the bulldozer.

Councillors had been due to set a demolition date for the iconic building during a meeting last night.

But they deferred making a final decision until they have more information about what the campaigners propose it could be used for.

The result was greeted with jubilation from members of the Friends of Dudley Hippodrome, who have been campaigning to have the building reopened as a theatre and congregated outside the council last night.

Supporters hailed councillors' 'common sense' for listening to their views.

Last year Dudley Council announced its plan to bring down the building as part of a £10 million project.

But the Friends group launched a petition which collected more than 20,000 signatures.

Thirty eight letters of objection were also received from residents and the Theatres' Trust.

Discussion

They even submitted a business plan for the resurrection of the theatre but the council has been told by an independent consultant that the plan was not viable.

Councillor Tim Wright said: "When it's gone, it's gone."

"I think we really really need to make sure every line of discussion has been explored before we consent to the demolition of the building."

Councillor Kieran Casey said the decision was 'really tricky' and his fellow councillor Asif Ahmed described it as "probably the hardest application I'll deal with".

Dr Paul Collins,

by Sharon Marris

spokesman for the Friends group, said: "I'm absolutely delighted that the members had the common sense to listen to the view of the people."

"I realise it's only a deferment but it gives us the opportunity for everything to be fully considered and I want to get the members inside the building."

"The outside is not so attractive but the interior is stunning and it's a magnificent theatre."

"I'm hoping that when they see that, it will win their hearts."

He added: "The vast majority of shows on in the West End at the moment could be at the Hippodrome."

The site of the Hippodrome has been earmarked for a £3 million Dudley Bug-shaped education and conference centre for Dudley Zoo.

A statement issued before last night's meeting by cabinet member for regeneration, Councillor Judy Foster, said: "We have an exciting opportunity to redevelop the site in conjunction with Dudley Zoo to provide a major new visitor attraction."

Netherton, Woodside and St Andrews and Quarry Bank and Dudley Wood community forum takes place on September 2.

For details, log on to www.dudley.gov.uk/about/community-council/community-forums/

140 jobs to go with closure of hauliers

A HAULAGE firm is to close its plant in the Black Country with the loss of 140 jobs, it was revealed today.

French distribution company Norbert Dentresangle will shut its depot in Rowley Regis and instead invest in a new central UK headquarters in Crick, Northamptonshire.

All 140 jobs at the plant in Doulton Road will go but staff are being given the chance to transfer to the Northamptonshire site.

Mike Bridges, managing director of Norbert Dentresangle transport services, said: "In line with our aim of continually improving our service to customers, Norbert Dentresangle is investing in a new 285,000sq ft facility at Crick for the UK Transport Services division."

"This change will involve the transfer of operations from our depot at Rowley Regis, which will close. The proposed relocation will be phased and is scheduled to begin from January 2014 and be completed by May."

Forklift truck driver Phil Mees, aged 44, said: "We were told last week that the Rowley Regis depot will close next March and we will all be made redundant. But it's too far for most of us."

Mr Mees, a divorcee living in Bluestone Walk, Rowley Regis, added: "I've worked here for eight years. We all knew this was coming - but I'm gutted really."

Forums to hear views

COMMUNITY forums are being held across Dudley to give residents the chance to raise issue. Ten meetings will run between September 2 and 11.

Netherton, Woodside and St Andrews and Quarry Bank and Dudley Wood community forum takes place on September 2.

The next day, Coseley East and Sedgley community forum will take place and Upper Gornal & Woodseton meeting is due.

For details, log on to www.dudley.gov.uk/about/community-council/community-forums/



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Inn for more rooms as hotel opens



Councillor Alan Finch at the hotel opening with staff members Tracy Williams, left, and Katie Hopkinson

A £3.5 MILLION hotel has opened in Dudley by the Mayor, Councillor Alan Finch. Premier Inn, which has 62 bedrooms on Castlegate Business Park, has opened 22 jobs.

Operations manager James Tishshaw said: "We're delighted to be opening here. We believe the location is excellent. We are in close proximity to Dudley Zoo and the Black Country Living Museum, it is perfect for families wanting to stop somewhere."

"We have initially taken on 22, but as the

custom increases I am sure we will be taking on new staff to meet the demand."

The hotel concentrated on bringing in people aged from 16 to 24 who had been out of work for some time.

Katie Hopkinson, aged 20, from Pensnett, who used to go to Prestwood School, Kingswinford, said: "It is fantastic they can help young people who are trying to look for a job but finding it hard in the current climate. I think it brings everyone together."

Unions in backlash over equal pay letdown claims

TWO workers' unions have spoken out after claims hundreds of women were let down in their battle for equal pay settlements from Dudley Council.

Almost 200 female former and current employees attended a meeting last week to voice their anger at unions and the council over the payouts they received.

Many of the women, which include catering staff, cleaners and care assistants, claim they were not given the right advice from union representatives - arguing they should have been offered more.

They say they could have got up to £85,000 each, but instead received as little as a few hundred pounds from the claims first made in 2010. But Andrew Maybury, secretary for Dudley General branch of UNISON, defended the union today, claiming the advice given to each affected woman was correct.

Mr Maybury said: "UNISON's solicitors advised the people who had received initial offers from the employers to reject them."

Solicitors

"However, many people chose to go against their advice and accepted the offers and legally signed away their rights to make further claims."

"Those people who followed the advice of the union's solicitors and rejected the initial offers have, by and large, received larger settlement offers."

He added: "It is the view of Dudley General Branch of UNISON that members did receive appropriate legal advice and that that advice has subsequently proved to be correct."

"We do not feel that we can be held responsible for those members who chose to reject the legal advice they were given."

Gordon Gibbs, secretary for the Dudley branch of GMB, also disputed the women's claims. He said: "The council did settle cases we were involved in, but it is untrue to say we told every person to accept, there were instances we told them not to take an offer. Obviously, every case was different and each one was treated on its own accord."



Protesters - current and former workers from Dudley Council with solicitor Paul Savage at the Hare & Hounds

Among those at the meeting was Helen Downes, aged 48, a senior support worker who has worked at the council for 11-and-a-half years, said they were going to fight for the money they were owed.

The mother of two said: "If we had known we would have been offered more, we would not have accepted those initial offers. We want to find someone who will take on our case and help us fight for the money we are owed."

At the meeting they were joined by equal pay activist Paul Savage who urged the women to write to the union bosses and ask them to investigate how they handled their equal pay claims.

"There are hundreds of women at Dudley Council who were given the wrong advice and have not received

the money they were owed," he said. "A proper investigation needs to take place into this, and the women need someone to help them fight for the money they are owed."

Alison Darke, 47, from Halesowen, who has worked as a care assistant at Dudley Council for nine years, said the council and unions have treated them appallingly.

Discuss

"They have treated us as if we are stupid, as if we wouldn't realise that others were being paid more," she said.

"They told everyone not to discuss their claims, in the hope we would not realise. The unions have not done their job properly and have not been on our side, and I know that's because we are women and they did

not think we were worth fighting for."

Dudley Council responded by saying no further payments would be given to those who had signed a legal agreement.

Councillor Gaye Partridge, cabinet member for human resources, legal and property, said: "Equal pay is an incredibly complex piece of work and every settlement is subject to a legal agreement approved by ACAS."

"Everyone is made fully aware of the circumstances when agreeing settlements, before making the agreement they are advised to take their own legal advice and speak to trade unions."

"However, we are unable to make any further payments where a legal agreement has been signed."

Ex-worker's pneumonia led to death

A QUADRIPLEGIC former factory worker died in hospital of pneumonia after his inability to move left him susceptible to chest infections, an inquest heard.

Andrew Homer, of Brierley Hill, was left immobile after a disc in his neck moved years ago and required constant care from his family and district nurses.

Dudley Coroners Court yesterday heard the 51-year-old had been admitted to Dudley Russells Hall Hospital on September 13 last year.

Senior coroner Mr Robin Balmain was told Mr Homer, of Leys Road, Brierley Hill, had suffered from pressure sores for some time despite equipment such as a specialised mattress.

He was taken to hospital for further treatment but had failed to respond to further courses of antibiotics. Mr Homer died on September 16, 2012. Mr Balmain concluded he had died from natural causes.

Music and dance feast

A FEAST of music and dance acts will appear in a variety show in Coseley in aid of the Mayor of Dudley's charities on August 22.

The show, starting at 8pm, will be held at Coseley Working Men's Club, Ivy-house Lane, off Birmingham New Road.

Councillor Alan Finch, Mayor of Dudley, said: "I'm delighted that the club is hosting the night for us and I am looking forward to seeing some talented entertainers and meeting people in the audience."

He will attend with his Mayoress, wife Heather, to represent his two chosen charities, White House Cancer Support and Hearing Dogs for Deaf People. Tickets cost £3 and are available from the club or by calling 07412 531924.

Helpers needed for a spruce up

VOLUNTEERS are needed to help spruce up Stourbridge. Tidy Stourbridge, which meets regularly, is holding a Pick 'n' Pint event on Wednesday August 14.

After the pick, volunteers then gather together for a well-earned pint. They should meet at The Raven pub on Woods Lane, Brierley Hill, at 7pm, to tackle rubbish in the Caledonia area to the west of Thorns Road, Quarry Bank.

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Building of offices under way

WORK is now well under way on the new two-storey office scheme being built for Staffordshire and West Midlands Probation Trust on Dudley's Castlegate Business Park. The scheme will see around 80 staff move into the new building when it is finished.

This will mean the closure of existing probation service offices in Stourbridge, Netherton and Halesowen. Offender management staff based at Dudley Magistrates' Court will also relocate to the new building.

On behalf of the probation trust, Birmingham-based property specialist Stoford has appointed Bromsgrove-based Benniman Construction Group to build and fit out the 10,000 sq ft development.

Work is due to be completed by the end of this year. The project has been funded by privately-owned property investment company AC Lloyd which will retain the completed development within its portfolio.

It is Stoford's second development on the site owned by the Homes and Communities Agency.

Health on MP agenda

Dudley North MP Ian Austin will meet officials from the borough's new health watchdog as part of his bid to raise patients' concerns.

He will be talking to members of Healthwatch Dudley to find out how it will deal with issues and complaints raised by residents.

The group is one of many across the country which have been tasked with helping patients air their concerns about local health-care and comes in the wake of reported higher than average death rates at Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital.

College chief's challenge joy

A COLLEGE director from Wall Health is celebrating after completing a gruelling 100-mile cycle challenge for charity. Kim Babb finished the Prudential London Surrey ride on Sunday in six hours and 50 minutes.

She took part in the challenge in memory of former Stourbridge College IT director Alex Speed, who died last year at the age of 45.

Watching your paes and queues on big day

FREE pigs pudding, grey paes and bacon served up in every pub, a live concert and flags flying – are just some of the ways Express & Star readers have suggested the region could celebrate all that is good about the Black Country.

The suggestions came after it was revealed a Black Country flag flew in front of a government office on a supposed Black Country Day – only no-one in the area knew anything about it.

Now, West Bromwich East MP Tom Watson has asked for opinions on whether

the Black Country should have an annual celebration, like people in the north celebrate Yorkshire Day.

A date for the day has been suggested as July 14 to coincide with the anniversary of the invention of the Newcomen Engine in 1712, the first steam engine in the world.

It comes after the Department of Communities and Local Government marked Black Country Day by raising a specially-designed banner on the anniversary of the invention of the Newcomen steam engine on July 14, which has pride of place at the Black Country Living Museum.

The banner depicts a chain link on a

black, white and red background and was designed last year as part of a competition.

The winning entry was by Gracie Sheppard, of Redhill Primary School, in Stourbridge. But the Express & Star has been asking for suggestions of what we should celebrate.

Ideas have included music stars like Led Zeppelin's Robert Plant or Noddy Holder and Slade as well as beers and breweries such as Batham's, Holden's, Davenport's or Banks'. Writing on the E&S Facebook page, Steve O'Brien said he'd want 'free pigs pudding, grey paes and bacon in every Banks's pub'.

Alan Stanfield agreed with serving up grey paes while adding another reason to celebrate would be 'seeing a great Black Country group, live'.

Members of the St John's Church Preservation Group said: "We have purchased our flag and will be flying it from next week."

Chris Kelly, Tory MP for Dudley South, was involved with the flag-raising event and said: "I'd like to see Black Country Day repeated next year. I think this, as the first celebration, was deliberately low key with the first flag unfurled above the Department for Local Communities and Government in Whitehall."

Peace medal honour for Korean War hero Gordon, who died, 86

by Sharon Marris

AN ex-serviceman from the Black Country was honoured for the vital role he played in the Korean War just weeks before his death following a battle with cancer.

Gordon Nicoll, 86, was presented with a Peace Medal sent by the Korean Embassy to recognise his service in the campaign at a ceremony held at Stourbridge's Mary Stevens Hospice.

The medal was created by the Korean Government to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the conflict and very few have been presented to anyone in the UK.

Mr Nicoll, who lived in Rowley Regis for many years, was presented with the award by Royal British Legion members David Weaver and Derek Wright during the ceremony on June 11, which was attended by four generations of the former soldier's family.

Staff at the hospice, in Hagley Road, worked to secure the accolade after being told Mr Nicoll, who served with the 1st Battalion Argyll and Southern Highlanders, had been awarded a Presidential Unit Citation years ago but had been unable to attend the presentation.

Ceremony

Mr Nicoll had been a full-time carer for his wife, Irene, at the time and could not travel to Stirling Castle for the ceremony. In later years his family had tried to get a citation but they were no longer available.

The Peace Medal was sent in lieu of the citation along with a message from Korean defence attaché Juhyeon Park expressing the country's 'heartfelt appreciation for his dedication'.

In a final twist, staff at the hospice tracked down and secured a citation for Mr Nicoll in America – and presented it to him in a smaller ceremony at the hospice on June 14. Just days later his condition deteriorated and he died on June 24.

His son Ian said: "When he received the Peace Medal he was very emotional. Then to finally get a citation, which he had wanted for so long, was just icing on the cake. I cannot praise staff at the hospice enough. They took all the work we had done in the past to try and secure an acco-



Gordon seen in 1944 shortly after joining up

lade and they just ran with it. It meant so much to my father. I am pleased he got to hold both those medals before he died." Mr Nicoll leaves behind two children, seven grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

He was born in Halfords Lane, West Bromwich, on an estate known affectionately as The Barracks on May 21 1927 and attended schools in Brasshouse Lane and Crocketts Lane. He left school at 14 and first

worked for Midland Red before joining the armed forces at the age of 17. Mr Nicoll first joined the Black Watch Regiment at the end of 1944 and was posted to Germany and India.

He was transferred to the Argyll and Southern Highlanders in 1948 serving in Palestine and Hong Kong before being dispatched to Korea.

He worked in the military transport section – which has the responsibility to



Gordon Nicoll and his wife Irene on their 1954 wedding day



The Korean Peace Medal sent by the country's embassy

transporting troops, weapons and food to the front lines. He was demobbed at the end of 1952 and returned to work at Midland Red as a heavy commercial vehicle mechanic later working for Guest Motors in West Bromwich and Yorkshire Imperial Metal Industries in Smethwick.

He married his wife at Smethwick Council House in 1954. Ian, who has a sister named Jayne, said all the family were all delighted to see him receive the accolades.

NEWS in brief

Brownies design security posters

DUDLEY police joined the 1st Sedgley Brownies as they designed posters to warn people about burglars as part of their crime prevention badge.

PCSO Michaela Evans, from the Sedgley and Gornal neighbourhood team, spoke to the youngsters. She told them how to help their parents and family members protect their home by keeping windows and doors shut and a light on if no-one is home.

The posters were presented to officers at Sedgley police station and two winning entries were chosen to be pinned to the station's noticeboard to raise awareness with local residents. The winners were eight-year-old Daisy Ford and Lilly Worton, seven.

Russells above average in poll

RUSSELLS Hall Hospital scored above the national average for the number of patients recommending its A&E department.

Patients across the country have been quizzed as to whether they would recommend A&E and in-patient wards at hospitals. Hospitals can score between -100 and 100 depending on how people rate the service, and Russells Hall got 61 – well above the average of 52.

However, just three per cent of patients responded to the survey for the Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust.

SpongeBob gives youngsters a treat

CHILDREN visiting a Dudley shopping centre were able to meet a popular cartoon character.

SpongeBob Square Pants dropped into Merry Hill and entertained families and posed with children for photographs.

Senior centre manager Kelly Reed said: "We knew he would be a hit and, with more than 600 people turning up to meet him, we were not wrong."

Hall opens up to show sneak peek

VISITORS to historic Himley Hall, near Dudley, will be able to take a sneak 'upstairs-downstairs' peek behind closed doors.

A series of guided tours are being set up to show people areas not usually open to the public.

The tours costing £6.50 run throughout August and September. Pre-booking is essential on 01384 817817.

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NEWS

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



CANCEL Armageddon. It seems all those dire warnings about bees and butterflies dying out and crops failing through lack of pollination may have been exaggerated. A few hot, sunny weeks have seen a startling rise in the number of insects, with some beekeepers claiming their hive colonies are back to normal. Watch out for a sudden change in the headlines over the coming weeks as our attitudes shift:

- *Bees and butterflies booming - official
 - *Enough bees - now buzz off!
 - *Clouds of butterflies ruin royal christening
 - *Miliband demands action on killer cabbage whites
 - *Mad moths bit my baby
- Remember, you read it here first.

□□□□□□□□

THE third SAS recruit struck down with heatstroke on the Brecon Beacons last month has died and still some armchair generals thunder on about the need to train special forces to the limits. If this triple tragedy had happened to SAS soldiers on patrol in Afghanistan, heads would roll. That it happened in full view of the public on a mountain in the UK is beyond belief, and beyond excuses.

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MICHAEL Curry and his partner Kathleen McLelland spent £20,000 on a caravan for their retirement. It was stolen and turned up 18 months later 10 miles down the road in Hampshire, occupied by a traveller family who claimed to have bought it from someone in a pub for £300. Police say there is not enough evidence to charge anyone with theft and, if the couple want their caravan back, they will have to take civil action because removing the travellers from the stolen caravan would breach their human rights. Do you remember a time when stories like this used to surprise us?

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REJOICE. This week Auntie Beeb finally told the nation what she has known for many months, that the phone-hacking carried out by the wicked Press was only the tip of the iceberg. As this column has pointed out several times, the Serious Organised Crime Agency, Soca, is aware of private detectives working not only for Fleet Street but for legal firms, celebrities and blue-chip companies. Yet while the BBC gave us saturation coverage of the Leveson Inquiry into Fleet Street's misbehaviour, it said barely a word about the Soca findings. Finally BBC News covered the story. I cherish the moment when the newsreader invited a correspondent to "explain this rather murky story." It is only rather murky, Auntie, because you have failed to shine a light on it.

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JUST back from a few days staying at an excellent pub in that pretty little corner where Shropshire meets Herefordshire and Wales. We slept well, lulled into nod by the baa-ing of sheep. Sheep are puzzling creatures. They lead very boring lives but always have something to talk about. We had a fabulous walk, up and down a succession of Housman's blue remembered Shropshire hills and valleys, emerging from dripping, Amazon-like rainforests into lush meadows with views of distant Caer Caradoc. Last year it would have been too wet for this eight-mile trek, last week it was too hot and who knows what next year will bring? Walk while you may because one day, long before you expect it, your walking days will be over and you will wonder, as you recharge your mobility scooter, why you never did Offa's Dyke.

□□□□□□□□

JANE Austen is to appear on the £10 note marking a little victory for women campaigners who feared male domination of Britain's paper currency. Miss Austen published just six novels, all of which make the point that the very best thing a woman can do with her life is marry a rich man. A strange sort of hero for the feminists.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Pensioners in village fall victim to conman

A CONMAN has been preying on 'kind-hearted' pensioners in a village near Stourbridge, taking cash from them after claiming he needed it to visit his sick wife.

Police said the victims - two elderly couples and a woman living in Hagley - were left feeling 'distressed and upset' after realising the man who called at their homes had tricked them into giving him money.

An arrest has now been made but police are still appealing for information.

A woman's purse was stolen, with cash in it, after a man called at the Worcester Road address and was let in by the elderly householder when he said he needed money to travel to see his wife in hospital.

Hagley Parish Council chairman Steve Colella said it was 'disgusting' anyone would prey on the elderly.

"It is terrible when people of any age are conned out of money but to target the elderly and vulnerable is very low indeed," he said.

Driver left with minor injuries as car hits van

A DRIVER suffered minor injuries after her car struck a parked goods van near to an accident blackspot in Dudley. Police, fire and paramedics were called to Temple Street, in Gornal, following the crash at around 6am last Thursday.

The driver was treated by the ambulance crew while firefighters closed the road near to its junction with Church Street for about 45 minutes to clear spilled petrol. She was taken to nearby Russells Hall Hospital, in Dudley, for further

checks and treatment but police said her injuries were not thought to be serious.

Meanwhile a pregnant woman was taken to hospital after a two car crash in Oldbury last Thursday.

Two cars collided on the Wolverhampton Road just before its junction with Hagley Road at around 8.30am, blocking the busy road.

Paramedics assessed one of the drivers who was a pregnant woman, and she was taken to Russells Hall Hospital for checks.

Author's joy after novel is new film

A LONG-awaited film adaptation of a Black Country author's debut novel starring Nicole Kidman and Colin Firth has been completed.

Writer Steve Watson, originally from Stourbridge, hailed the two hours he spent watching the movie as 'the most emotional night of my life'.

Before I go to Sleep is based on the book of the same name, which has sold more than 350,000 copies. Nicole Kidman will star in the film alongside fellow Hollywood heavyweight Colin Firth.

She will play Christine Lucas, who wakes up to find she does not recognise her life, while Colin Firth will play her husband Ben.

Mr Watson attended a screening of the film in London with other stars, crew members and the production company. A few changes are expected to be made before the final cut is put together ahead of its release early next year.

Mr Watson said: "The film is absolutely brilliant - it was one of the most emotional nights of my life. Nicole Kidman is totally brilliant as Christine."

Mr Watson spent a number of days on set in London during the winter. The movie is expected to be one of the biggest hits of the year when it is released.

Mr Watson, aged 41, said Kidman had 'really got inside the character'.

He added: "It was like seeing my imagination brought to life - like walking around in my own head."

Poor families face cut to council tax benefits

COUNCIL tax benefits could be cut for low-income families in Dudley borough under plans to make savings.

Dudley Council is considering making changes to its Council Tax Reduction scheme from April 2014 in order to save cash. The council's decision-making cabinet has already formally recommended an 8.5 per cent reduction.

by Sharon Marris

However it will not make a final decision until later this year. A fresh consultation has now been launched to get residents' views on whether the scheme should continue as it is or the changes should be made.

Last year the Government abolished the national council tax benefit scheme and replaced it with local initiatives - such as the Council Tax Reduction scheme. It meant a 10 per cent loss in Government funding, around £2.4 million in Dudley.

Changing

Following a consultation, the authority decided to protect all low income families from any cuts in the council tax benefits they receive.

But officials today said that the authority was facing further cuts to its funding and a decision had to be made on whether to make savings by changing the reduction scheme.

Residents are being asked to choose between three options. The first is to make no cut at all while the second is the authority's favoured

option of an 8.5 per cent cut with some protection for vulnerable groups. The third option is for a 20 per cent cut in the amount of council tax reduction given by the council. This would mean low-income families would have to pay more council tax.

Pensioners must be protected from any changes to the scheme - but the consultation asks if any other groups should also be protected if changes are made.

The consultation can be completed at www.dudley.gov.uk/benefits

Alternatively, copies are available at Dudley Council Plus and all borough libraries. The consultation ends on October 18 and a decision made later in the year.

Cabinet member for finance, Councillor Pete Lowe, said: "Last year we made the decision to fully protect residents from the Government's policy change. However, finances continue to be under severe pressure, which means we really need to ask local people what they think."

Revamp shuts post office

A POST office in Stourbridge will be closed for more than two weeks for refurbishment. The High Street outlet will be shut until August 19. The work will see the number of counter positions increase from four to five. Opening hours will also be increased by three hours a week. During the work, customers have been told to use nearby Post Offices in High Street, Lye and Junction Road, Stourbridge.

Zoo loco gets first woman driver



Volunteer Sally Skinner gets behind the wheel as Dudley Zoo's first woman train driver

A DUDLEY Zoo volunteer has been left chuffed after becoming the first female land train driver in the attraction's history.

Sally Skinner passed all the rigorous road train driving tests with flying colours and can now be found behind the wheel of the much-loved locomotive every Sunday.

The 38-year-old, from Cradley Heath, is a well-known face at the zoo having been a volunteer for three years.

She said: "It was a bit overwhelming at first being in a very male dominated environment and I do get the odd quips about women drivers, but I am very proud to be Dudley Zoo's first female train driver."

"It's quite difficult to drive as it's completely different to driving a car, but I am

enjoying it and it's great to see the children's reactions to the train as they all love riding on it."

"I'm also having to get used to having my photo taken quite a lot, as children want to be pictured with me and the train."

The red locomotive-style land train travels up and down Castle Hill, taking aboard dozens of children, parents, buggies and baggage every day.

It was introduced on site 25 years ago. The 2.5-litre diesel Dotto train runs throughout the zoo's main season and Christmas, plus additional events. The vehicle, which was made in Italy, has two carriages and can carry up to 40 children or 30 adults for each journey.

Recycling bin rounds are up and running

NEW recycling and household rubbish collections started in Dudley this week.

Around 40,000 homes have received two recycling bags and a grey wheellie bin for non-recyclable waste.

Dudley Council began to collect plastic bottles and cardboard from homes from Monday.

It comes after the council received a government grant of £1.8 million to expand its services.

There are 40,000 homes in the first phase of the project with the rest following in two additional phases before spring next year.

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Call goes up to sign on for the great run

PEOPLE are being urged to sign up for the second annual fun run around the streets of Halesowen in September.

The run, which has been renamed the Great Black Country Road Run, helps raise money for good causes around the region.

Around 400 people signed up for last year's run but the event has now been expanded to include both 5k and 10k courses.

Organisers from the Halesowen and Rowley Regis Rotary Club are now hoping to entice athletes around the country to take part in the race.

Visit www.bostinrun.com for more details and to sign up.

Around 800 places are available for the September 22 event.

Rotarian Alan Bowler, who is the event director, said: "Last year's fun run was an unprecedented success, a community fun-filled event and raised £6,000 for good causes but the 2013 event will be even bigger and better."

He added: "We wanted to open up the event to the whole region so from now on it will be called 'The Great Black Country Road Run and we have implemented changes so even more money can go to local charities and good causes."

Money raised from last year's event was shared between Midland Air Ambulance, MacMillan Nurses and Birmingham Children's Hospital's cancer unit.

Crash teenager goes back home

A TEENAGER who was taken to hospital after being hit by a car at a busy junction in Kidderminster is back at home.

The 17-year-old girl suffered pelvic injuries from the accident at the junction of Hurcott Road and Chester Road North in Kidderminster.

She has now been released from Birmingham's Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Old film is rerun

A SCREENING of The Band Wagon starring Fred Astaire will take place at Stourbridge Town Hall in September. It will start at 1.30pm and tickets cost £3. The film tells the story of a movie star whose career is in a downturn.

Dear deer for residents' garden wildlife treat



A muntjac deer which has been in gardens

THIS little deer caused a stir among neighbours when it was spotted foraging in gardens.

It is thought to be a muntjac – a common sight in the countryside but rarer in towns. Retired design engineer John Smallwood, aged 77, rushed for his camera to photograph the deer when he spotted the animal in his garden in Eveson Road, Norton, near Stourbridge.

He said: "It was amazing – I've never seen a muntjac in a garden before."

"I was looking out of my bedroom window at about 8.20am and saw a shape disappearing into the foliage."

"It emerged again and I could see it was a small deer, which I later identified on the

internet as a muntjac. It wandered around and then disappeared through a hole in the fence into my neighbour's garden, where I took the pictures."

Mr Smallwood, who lives with his wife, Pam, is used to seeing foxes in his garden and is a keen bird-watcher. He spotted the deer on Sunday morning.

He said: "The little deer went on into another neighbour's garden and then I lost it. It's been a topic of conversation since in the area – it was smashing."

Zoologist Dr David Beeston, registrar and research co-ordinator at Dudley Zoo, said the species was a Reeves's muntjac – a native of China but now common in the British countryside. He could tell that it was

a male because it had new antlers growing. "They live wild in large numbers," said Dr Beeston.

"It's been very dry and it had probably come from the countryside surrounding Norton to look for more lush vegetation and gardens, which are watered, are more lush."

Otters

"A number of wild animals are now cropping up in towns in the West Midlands – for instance it's possible to catch sight of otters in canals. We've got buzzards circling over Dudley Castle and there are wild polecats around towns now. It's amazing how wildlife is repopulating urban areas."

A bun in the oven sees cake couple cook up retirement

A BUN in the oven is halting four decades of cake-making by a Black Country couple known to thousands of local brides.

For Michael and June Gadd, who have produced an estimated 14,000 wedding cakes in their 40 years in business, are now expectant grandparents. And they have decided to retire so that they are free to travel frequently from their Sedgley home to America – to see their grandchild, due to be born over the New Year to their 28-year-old son Michael and his wife Shannon in Chicago.

They are in the process of selling up their equipment at Gadd's Special Cakes in Watsons Green Road, Kates Hill, Dudley, ready to close at the end of August, after putting the icing on their final orders.

"We're very excited about expecting our first grandchild," June said.

Longer

"We've seen the scans and are looking forward to the birth between December 31 and January 6."

"Our son wanted us to go and live in Chicago, where he is a financial adviser, but we decided, after 40 years, we would retire at the top of our game so that we can go for longer periods to America to see our grandchild."

Michael, now aged 68, met June, 62, when he was chef and she was receptionist at the Park Hall Hotel in Wolverhampton, which was winning competitions thanks to his skills.

Michael and June first set up business at the Fighting Cocks pub in Fighting Cocks, Wolverhampton, in 1973.

Four years later, after Michael won a gold award in

by Louise Jaw

London for his cake-making skills, they spread their wings and moved to their current premises.

He is the master craftsman behind the creation of lavish confections, which have ranged from replicas of the Empire State Building and the Eiffel Tower to a snorkelling bride and groom, while June handles the design, marketing and finances.

"You can always tell a Michael Gadd cake from the taste," said June.

"They're made in the old fashioned way, using family recipes with top quality ingredients."

Colourful creations and cakes for christenings, birthdays, anniversaries and all kinds of celebrations have filled their bakery with sweet aromas – tempting customers who call into their showroom.

Brides have chosen all manner of themes for their cakes – from camper vans to castles and Disney palaces.

There was even one who wanted a coffin cake – because the couple met at Gornal Wood Crematorium.

But one of June's favourites ever was a wedding cake festooned with sugar, hand-carved flowers, delivered to Patshull Park.

Now their premises – the old Vanes bakery, built in 1939 – is to be turned into flats.



Mike and June Gadd from Michael Gadd Cakes for Special Occasions who are shutting up shop after 40 years

Ex-MP in running to join EU parliament

A FORMER Stourbridge MP is in the running to become a Labour candidate to try and win a seat in the European Parliament.

Neena Gill, who lost her West Midlands seat in Brussels in 2009, has been chosen by the party to contest the elections next May.

Her position as the leading candidate means she is almost guaranteed of winning back her old job because of the European system of proportional representation, which allocated seats based on parties' shares of the vote.

Sion Simon, former MP for Erdington, is second on the list and will win a seat if Labour improves its share of the vote. He stood down as an MP in 2010 to campaign for Birmingham to have an elected mayor.

Former Stourbridge MP Lynda Waltho is third on the list. She lost her seat in Westminster to Tory Margot James in 2010. The other candidates

are Birmingham councillor Ansar Ali Khan, Stoke councillor Olwen Hamer, lawyer Anthony Ethapem and Rugby councillor Claire Edwards.

However they are only likely to get elected if the Tories, Lib Dems and UK Independence Party all poll very badly.

Labour's deputy leader Harriet Harman said: "I am proud that that such strong, committed and inspiring people have been picked by ordinary Labour Party members."

NEWS

in brief

Taxi fares could be about to rise

TAXI fares in Wyre Forest could be increased after proposals were lodged by drivers amid concerns over the rising cost of fuel and licence fees.

Councillors will consider an application for a change in the Hackney Carriage fare tariff – the maximum amount drivers can charge for journeys.

Four options for new fares have been put forward by Bewdley Taxi Association with increases ranging from around three to 16 per cent depending on the length of the trip.

A four-week consultation has already taken place with 60 people, who work in the trade, saying they favoured a rise.

Roof fall man is rescued by crew

FIRE and ambulance crews rescued an injured man who appeared to have fallen through a hole in the roof of a disused abattoir on the edge of Stourport.

The man was brought down from the first floor by Stourport's retained fire crew.

He was given pain relief before being taken to hospital.

Memories spark from radio meet

SCHOOL memories came flooding back for an MP during a visit to a community radio station after meeting one of his former classmates.

Ian Austin, who is MP for Dudley North, visited volunteers at Black Country Community Radio in Dudley.

Among the station staff is Jon Hotchkiss who grew up alongside Mr Austin when they attended Dudley Grammar School.

Prostate therapy prolonging lives

NEW treatments have tripled the life expectancy of British men with incurable prostate cancer over the last 10 years, research has shown.

Patients treated at a leading London cancer hospital that pioneers new therapies now survive 41 months on average, compared with between 13 and 16 months a decade ago.

Chance to get fit

PEOPLE who want to keep fit can take part in exercise classes in Dudley. Sessions are held at Richardson Hall, Lawnswood Road, Wordsley. Admission is £2 which includes biscuits.

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NEWS FEATURE

IN MY VIEW

WITH
MARK
ANDREWS

ANOTHER term beckons for Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe following his landslide victory in last week's general election.

There have been some voices expressing concerns that the ballot might have been rigged, but these suspicions do not seem to be shared by people on the ground. A recent opinion poll showed that among the population of Harare, 140 per cent believed the vote was free and fair.

POOR little rich kids, don't you just love them?

Natalie Hynde, the daughter of Pretenders singer Chrissie Hynde and Kinks frontman Ray Davies, was arrested last week for her part in a protest against shale gas exploration in Sussex.

So miffed was Harry Potter lookalike Natalie, that she and boyfriend Simon 'Sitting Bull' Medhurst decided to super-glue themselves to the entrance gate of the site where the work was taking place. Not my idea of a day out in the country, but each to their own.

However, they appear to have overlooked one obvious flaw in their protest, which came unstuck the moment officers arrived with a bottle of super-glue thinner. Flippin' coppers, they think of everything don't they? Still, the pair had their moment in the limelight. And besides, the weather over the weekend was atrocious.

It seems that Natalie is actually a bit of a jack-of-all-trades of the protest movement, having previously been involved in the Occupy London sit-in and the demonstration against the Bexhill-to-Hastings link road.

Natalie now describes herself as a 'full-time environmental protester', which sure beats working in a supermarket, even if the wages aren't much cop.

Of course youthful rebellion is nothing new, but Natalie is 30 years old and Simon the Sitting Bull 55. Wouldn't you have expected them to have got all this out of their system and, I dunno, settled down into a job, by now?

Maybe Simon, who used to work as an RAF photographer, is having a mid-life crisis, but I think on balance a Harley Davidson makes more sense.

WE HAVE heard much about the rip-off charges of banks, and utility providers, but what about car insurance providers?

This week I have been charged £45 by my car insurance broker for simply changing the number plate on my car.

This 'administration fee' is nearly a quarter of my annual premium. Apparently, £15 of it goes to the insurance company for updating the documents, and the remaining £30 to the broker for the onerous task of taking the details and passing the information on.

Time for an investigation, I think.



With her vast collection of trophies at home in Dudley



Daughter Lauren, who is now seven, holds a trophy



Reanne during the Wuxi Classic in China last month

World champ Reanne breaks from the norm

ANDREW TURTON talks to one woman who combines life as a top snooker player with being a young mother

SHE juggles motherhood with hours in the practice room perfecting big breaks to become the queen of women's snooker.

Yet the reigning ladies world snooker champion Reanne Evans can go unnoticed as she joins parents on the school run in her home town Dudley.

The 27-year-old, from Gornal, is top of the women's game, lifting the WLSA World Ladies' Snooker title nine consecutive times.

But the Black Country's queen of the baize is not content to notch records against other women players and is now trying to establish herself at the highest level of the men's professional tour.

While the men's game is going through a commercial revolution at the hands of sports magnate Barry Hearn, the women's game often goes unnoticed in clubs across the country.

Devoted

Reanne scraped together what prize money she wins along with support from her devoted family to allow her to travel on the women's tour across the country.

The game is quickly expanding to far-flung destinations abroad like the Far East and Russia.

And Reanne is now sharing the spotlight with the greats of the game including 'The Rocket' Ronnie O'Sullivan and former world champion John Higgins.

She became the first woman ever to reach the final stages of a main ranking snooker tournament when she qualified for the 2013 Wuxi Classic in China last month.

She received adulation as she was mobbed by fans, signing autographs and posing for pictures. But despite all her success so far she says nothing is more



Women's World Champion snooker player Reanne Evans with her trophy

satisfying than being a mother to her seven-year-old daughter Lauren.

"It's brilliant and I hate to be away from her," Reanne explained. "But luckily I have built-in babysitters with my parents who are a great help to me. Also we have Facetime (mobile video calling) which has helped a lot."

"You know you are away on tour and that's your job and you've got to do it but it helps that she is with my mom and dad."

"I won one world championship when I was seven-and-a-half months pregnant with my daughter. I went there

to practice until by chance one day Reanne picked up a cue and realised she had talent. "My elder brother was late for practice one day so his mates said 'come on pick your cue up, let's have a game' and we played and I took to it straight away," Reanne says.

She says she received funny looks from men in the clubs, adding: "I was the only girl at the time so there was a little bit of a thing but I used to beat all of my brothers' mates and they'd never come in again."

She was soon part of Midlands league teams at the age of 16 and was encouraged to play on the ladies' tour – all while studying part time at sixth form. It was not long before success followed and in 2005 she won her first world title aged 19. Her father created a purpose-built snooker room in the back garden at home to help her improve.

Coverage

Trophy cabinets are packed full of prizes and her burgeoning career has also been supported by On Q Promotions.

But Reanne says she is happy to help lead the way for the women's game to get more coverage.

"I also want other women to be playing on the men's tour," she said. "I've taken my coaching badge and I'm now a World Snooker coach so if they want me to help the ladies then I'd be happy to do it."

"I want to prove that I can play and make a living out of a game that I like playing."

Reanne has called on businessman Barry Hearn, who led the development of darts and boxing coverage, to help develop the women's side of the game to coincide with his commercial transformation of snooker.

Ideas include a mixed doubles event and changes to the seeding structure for main tournaments to improve competition and encourage women to play.

"At the minute there is only me playing on the men's tour but I'd love for there to be more," she said.

THROUGH THE YEARS

1983...

BRIDE Adele Hughes was left blushing after her £70,000 Rolls Royce wedding car broke down. A replacement Bentley was hurriedly dispatched to her Wombourne home but she still arrived 10 minutes late for the ceremony.

A WOLVERHAMPTON man had a lucky escape after a gas cylinder exploded, setting his bathroom ablaze. Fleet-footed David Manford escaped with minor burns after leaping to safety through the bathroom window of his terraced house in Bilston.

WEST Bromwich Albion players and officials were involved in a mid-air drama during a flight to a pre-season training trip in Amsterdam. Their jet developed an engine fault as it was flying over Norfolk, forcing the captain to make an emergency landing at Heathrow Airport.

1993...

WELEPHANT met the elephants during a preview of a jumbo fire safety scheme at Dudley Zoo. The West Midlands fire service mascot met real-life elephants Kasama and Flossie to promote the fire prevention campaign which was aimed at children and pensioners.

A PRACTICAL joker who was sacked when a prank backfired won back his job with Dudley Council. The prankster lost his job after advertising a colleague's car for sale at a knockdown price leaving the victim inundated with calls from bargain-hunters.

EIGHT hundred Chubb workers in Wolverhampton staged the first of a planned wave of strikes over a management plan to stop union meetings. Staff at the three Woden Road factories walked out despite the company denying it had adopted an anti-union line.

2003...

SIR Bobby Charlton was at Mollinex for an emotional ceremony to unveil a bronze statue of Wolves legend Stan Cullis. The nine-foot statue features a bronze pinth carved with Cullis's most poignant saying: "You only get one life, and I gave mine to the Wolves."

AT least one fire engine in Wolverhampton was out of service every day due to a shortage of firefighters in the city. Officials said recruitment problems during a period of industrial action meant not all of the city's fire engines could be manned.

A Stourbridge grandmother had a new-found claim to fame after discovering she designed the motif on the Zimbabwe flag. Joan Haigh originally designed the bird emblem for a carpet in a civic building in Zimbabwe in 1958.

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LETTERS

Frustration over bus lane confusion

I AM completed frustrated with the unnecessary bus lanes in Halesowen Town Centre. This has been a blight for local residents and the community now for more than eight years.

It angers me to find West Midlands Police have recently been 'tweeting' about the number of fixed penalty tickets issued on July 26 for drivers who were using the bus lane.

Under many circumstances this is unavoidable because of the way the road markings are set out, ie leaving Pool Road from the public car park on a busy Friday to travel towards Dudley.

It is my understanding that Dudley Council agreed a plan to remove these

after the completion of the new bus station and return the Queensway into Halesowen and Bromsgrove Road out of Halesowen to their original state.

The bus station has been complete for two years now and still the council has not put forward a plan to resolve this.

As a local who visits the town centre regularly I am fully aware of the problems these bus lanes have caused for the community.

It is now impossible to join Bromsgrove Road from Pool Road during busy periods as this means crossing the bus lane and the queues form all the way back into the centre of Halesowen. It is

also dangerous travelling down the Bromsgrove Road past Tenterfields where, on busy periods, the inside lane converges and all the traffic is forced into one lane.

It is no surprise people are using an empty bus lane when there is a high volume of traffic and they can see nothing in the bus lane.

Normal traffic far outnumbers the volume of buses which use the route and it is about time the road system was put back to its original design to benefit the majority of road users.

NICK GREGORY
Howley Grange Road
Halesowen

Elderly will suffer with more bins

IT seems Dudley council has decided to introduce another wheelie bin in the autumn for our household rubbish.

Where we live it is very hilly and I was wondering how the older folk are going to cope having to wheel out their cumbersome bin, pull it down steps to place at the edge of the pavement and then lug it back into their gardens when empty.

How are they going to cope when there is snow and ice on the pavements, it is a pity Dudley did not offer wheelie bins as an option, rather than making them compulsory.

It is also a pity they did not ask those that vote them in, whether we would actually like another wheelie bin.

Maybe the council is going to employ an operative that will go around and replace the said new bins back into older folks properties.

PHIL WALKER
Intended Street
Halesowen

LETTERS to the Editor

POST

Dudley Chronicle, Chronicle
Editorial, 51-53 Queen Street,
Wolverhampton
WV1 1ES

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number of the writer. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

E-MAIL

Dudley.chrons@
expressandstar.co.uk

Improved transport is the way forward

PETER Rhodes uses every opportunity to criticise the High Speed 2 plans (July 25), even though his piece a week earlier suggests he has little idea what is actually in them.

But I am surprised the Chronicle has failed even to acknowledge there is an argument in favour of HS2.

Only by improving transport can the UK's economy become less centralised in the south east and without better infrastructure, Britain will lose out to international competitors who are investing in theirs. Also by diverting inter-city passengers on to new tracks, more capacity on existing routes will be available for regional passengers, commuters and freight.

The plans cleverly bring major improvements to inter-regional links and new journey opportunities between the Midlands and North and places such as Heathrow.

And not least, that the Stourbridge area will benefit in particular because of its privileged links directly to the hub of the new network at Birmingham Moor Street.

CASPAR LUCAS
Castle Grove
Oldswinford, Stourbridge

Workmanship

MANY people living in Sedgley will appreciate the standard of workmanship being carried out in replacing the stone wall in Gospel End Road, Sedgley.

Perhaps now someone on the council will look at turning Gospel End Road by the Court House pub into a one-way system either by using Vicar Street or by removing the unused toilets and using the top part of Ettimore Road.

PL CUNNEEN
Tennyson Road
Lower Gornal

Hospital praise

DURING the past three and a half years I have spent time in Russells Hall Hospital, at the clinics and recently two stays on the day care unit. The staff were brilliant from reception to the anaesthetists who came to talk you through what was going to happen once you were taken into the theatre. Nothing was too much trouble everyone was brilliant. Also, Corbett's urology department staff are superb. Many thanks to all.

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MEMORY LANE



Dudley Hippodrome, which was opened in 1938 on the site of the Opera House



Some years later, the Hippodrome in 1970, 12 years after it became a bingo hall



Babes in the Wood at Dudley Hippodrome in 1943, with Billy Russell on the right



Inspecting the damage of the burnt-out Dudley Opera House in 1936

Hippodrome was a magnet for a long list of top stars

by Professor Carl Chinn

THE opening of the elegant Dudley Opera House on Monday, September 4, 1899 was a spectacular event for the town.

Honoured guests included the Earl and Countess of Dudley, the mayor, and members of the town council.

They were joined by 'a large and fashionable audience' who tested the holding capacity of this 'handsome building, occupying a commanding position'.

Designed in the Italian Renaissance style, it was made of red brick with terracotta dressings, while its stage was of such height, width and depth that 'it will allow of the most elaborate scenic effects'.

That evening it was brought alive with a performance of *The Mikado* by the D'Oyly Carte Repertory Company, admirably supported by Dudley's orchestra.

It must have been a most proud night for John Maurice Clement, the man whose energy and enthusiasm had pushed forward this project on land he had purchased from the Earl of Dudley. Born in the town, Clement had once worked at the Earl's estate office, but he was always drawn to theatre.

From involvement in amateur dramatics he became a theatrical agent and in 1888 he opened his first theatre, *The Colosseum* in Trindle Road. This had been

a circus but it became the home of drama in Dudley until the Opera House was finished.

Like most owners of similar theatres Clement was unable to get by with productions of operas and Shakespearean plays. He had to widen the appeal with more popular plays and even variety shows. Dudley Opera House continued in this vein until 1936 when it closed after it was damaged badly by fire. The site was then bought by the Kennedy brothers who built the Hippodrome theatre and the Plaza cinema next door.

Streamlined

A splendid Art Deco building, the Hippodrome was designed by Archibald Hurley Robinson, a Birmingham architect who was well-known for his Art Deco cinemas. This connection explains why from the outside the Hippodrome looked like a super-cinema with its streamlined facade. Inside, there were also Art Deco decorations.

The Hippodrome held 1,700 people and was one of the biggest and best-known venues across the Midlands. There were full houses as top artists and comedians appeared. Laurel and Hardy performed there, as did Bob Hope – and when he did so, crowds packed the

approach roads in the hope of getting a glimpse of the American star. Variety, plays and musical comedy also drew sizeable audiences, while the D'Oyly Carte Company with operettas by Gilbert and Sullivan was popular, as were spectacular ice shows and celebrated pantomimes. But the theatrical heyday was brought to an end by the rise of television, and the Hippodrome closed as a live venue in February 1964.

Fortunately, it continued to be a popular venue as a bingo club from 1967. Sadly, though, this magnificent building has lain empty since 2005 and is threatened with demolition. Malcolm Palmer is one of many local people who vehemently oppose these plans; instead they want the Hippodrome to be brought back into use.

Here, Malcolm shares with us some of his memories of that iconic structure:

"I first started going to the Hippodrome in the latter part of the 1940s with either my parents or my aunt and uncle. The pantomimes were always special and a great attraction to youngsters like myself. Early recollections included seeing Billy Russell in pantomime.

"Russell was Birmingham-born and in the latter part of his life had regular appearances in Crossroads.

Malcolm was instrumental in starting the Friends of the Hippodrome, which is campaigning to bring the building back into full and sustainable use.

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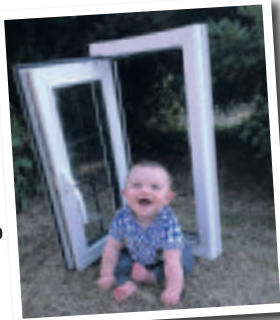
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NEWS

Sky is the limit for Karl as he aims for his wings

A DISABLED former soldier who was so badly burned by a bomb attack in Iraq that he had to learn to walk again, is training to be a pilot.

And while Karl Hinett is in the air so is love because he popped the question to his girlfriend.

The Dudley soldier-turned-fundraiser proposed to girlfriend Beth Platts, aged 26, on a trip to Japan.

Now he is in training to get his licence with hopes of becoming a commercial pilot when he qualifies.

Karl, also 26, lives in Dudley with Miss Platts, who supported him in his epic challenge to run 100 marathons in two years in aid of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Charity Birmingham, said he proposed while they were overseas two months ago.

Amazing

Although he has a wedding to plan, although no date has yet been set, Karl, of Stirling Road, will be staying focussed on his latest goal.

He said: "It was funded by Help for Heroes and the place where I am actually training is Blackbushe Airport, Surrey.

"The company who are sorting out all the training is a company called Aerobility which caters specifically for disabled people, so they help get people with disabilities and teach them to fly.

"Currently what I am training to do is complete my private pilot's licence which in the grand scheme of becoming a pilot is the start of it which requires me to do a minimum of 45 hours of flying.

"There are numerous exams that I have to sit, a lot of theory, but that is the first step on the ladder to becoming a commercial pilot."

Karl started training earlier this month and admitted the challenge was



Karl Hinett looks to the future as he undertakes training to be a pilot

daunting. "It really is nerve-wracking," he said.

"There was no messing about, we were straight into the air with the good weather we had, so I got a lot of practise up in the air.

Tricky

One of the tricky manoeuvres was learning how to cope when the aircraft stalls so that was quite nerve-wracking, but it was amazing and it is all run by people who have experienced hardship through their own disabilities and the people who run it are amazing."

"When the opportunity came along I jumped at it," he added.

As a private with the Staffordshire Regiment, Karl suffered severe burns to his hands, legs, arms and face after

the armoured vehicle he was travelling in was bombed in Iraq in 2005 while he was serving in the Army.

His injuries were so bad he had to painstakingly learn to walk again.

But he said the experience has made him snap up any challenges that come his way.

"I could never imagine half the things that I have done now I would have done before I was injured," he said. "The injury changed my life, it just made me really say 'yes' more when opportunities came along.

"Everyone's a bit hesitant when trying new things, but instead of backing down to nerves and uncertainty I just think at least I have tried. It has definitely given me a brighter outlook on life."

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Fence vandals under fire after teen tragedy in pool at disused quarry



Drowned - Augusto

A CORONER has criticised vandals who damaged a fence around a disused quarry allowing youngsters to access the site, including a teenager who drowned in a pool there, as an inquest ruled his death was accidental.

Police said the firm which had owned the site did 'everything it reasonably could' to secure the pool known locally as

the Blue Lagoon near Himley. A jury yesterday took less than 30 minutes to return a verdict of accidental death on the death of 15-year-old Augusto Zacarias.

Jurors heard Augusto and a group of friends had entered the site, through a gap in a fence on July 25 last year. The teenager, who could not swim, had slipped from a ledge and into the marl hole pool, near the Crooked House pub, Himley.

His friends had desperately tried to help him but the teenager had panicked. Jurors heard his friends had managed

to get him to the side of the pool but, in his fear, he had pulled away from the edge.

Emergency services were called but Augusto disappeared beneath the water.

Giving evidence at the hearing at Smethwick Coroner's Court, John Davies, health, safety and environment manager at Wienerberger, which owned the site at the time of the tragedy said: "On the morning this tragedy took place we had a contractor out to repair the fence as there had been trespassers on the day before," he said. "There was a situation where

repairs could be done in the morning and the fence could be damaged again later the same day."

And he added 4x4 vehicles had been used to tear down the fence previously.

Senior Coroner Mr Robin Balmain said: "The damage to the fence was caused by someone from the community. The people who have done this know who they are and will need to live with the fact that what they did will undoubtedly have been an encouragement for these boys to go onto the site."

Councillor climbs every mountain

Veteran fundraiser, Dudley councillor Steve Waltho has climbed every mountain, at least in the Lake District valley of Wasdale, for his latest challenge.

Adventurous Steve, aged 57, tackled four routes, conquering 20 peaks, including England's highest mountain, Scafell Pike. The expedition took a total of 29 hours, covering 40 miles with a total ascent of 15,000ft.

The representative of St Thomas's ward in Dudley, said: "Giving something back to those less fortunate whilst still able to enjoy the outdoors is a win-win situation for me. I did question my own sanity one evening whilst desperately trying to shelter behind rocks at 2,500ft in a torrential thunderstorm."

He estimates that, thanks to the help of colleagues at Solway in Oldbury and at Dudley Council, he will raise about £1,500 to split among Leukemia Care, Action Heart, Dudley Cancer Support and West Midlands Lupus.

Fans in the pink for Grease spectacular



Pink Ladies Donna Eccleston, Lisa Mitchell, and Laura McElhinney who were there to watch the film Grease

IT really was a summer night to remember as Grease became the word again - at a drive-in movie night at Dudley's Merry Hill shopping centre.

The iconic film went down like greased lightning with more than 400 local 'T-Birds and Pink Ladies' from all over the Midlands singing their hearts out as they enjoyed the on-screen action.

The centre transformed one of its car parks into a cinema, inviting film fans to dance and sing along to the classic tracks, including Summer Nights.

In the heatwave, many of those who did not have convertible cars just sat on the bonnets of their vehicles to enjoy the 1950s romance.

MP welcomes move for specialist homes

A COUNCIL-led scheme to build two new specialist facilities for people living with learning disabilities and autism has been welcomed by a Black Country MP.

A total of 14 flats at sites in Norfolk Road, in Wollaston, and The Walk, in Sedgley, will be built under the project, announced last week.

It was made possible after £385,000 was awarded from the Government's Care and Support Specialist Housing Fund.

The total cost of the scheme will be £2.1 million.

Dudley South MP Chris Kelly said: "I am absolutely delighted by this announcement and the benefits that it will bring to those with learning difficulties in the Dudley area."

"The 14 apartments on the Wollaston and Sedgley sites will provide an improved quality of care, through long-term supported living, for its residents."

The grant is part of a £130m nationwide funding announced by the Homes & Communities Agency.

It follows previous successful bids by the council, including an award of £36,000 to forge ahead with plans to transform the first floor of the boarded-up Merlin's Cafe and Wine Bar in Wolverhampton Street, Dudley, into one-bedroom apartments.

Zebra will stop board-om

A ZEBRA has returned to Dudley Zoo for the first time in 15 years - but all is not what it seems.

The striped animal is actually a life-size cardboard creation, handmade by a talented volunteer to be used with the attraction's pack of African hunting dogs.

The work was carried out by Laura Partridge, aged 22, from Tipton. The cardboard zebra was filled with tasty meat treats by keepers before being placed in the enclosure. Zoo presenter, Caroline Howard, said: "Laura is a really great volunteer. We are really grateful to her."

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NEWS

Chance meeting for diamond couple



Doreen and Ken Price who met while out with friends, mark their anniversary



The couple on their wedding day

A COUPLE who met by chance outside a well-known Black Country landmark are celebrating 60 years of married bliss. Ken and Doreen Price were both out with friends for a walk when they got chatting outside Sedgley's Clifton Cinema in the town centre. Their relationship soon flourished and they courted for five years before tying the knot on July 18, 1953. The couple celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary at the Bell at Belbroughton pub.

Doreen was born in Sedgley and raised in nearby Colesey while Ken was born and bred in his house in North Oval, Upper Gornal. The couple still live in Mr Price's family

home. Mr Price, who attended Tutor County Primary School, worked for the MEB for more than 25 years.

His wife had been a pupil at Queen Victoria Primary School before working at various places including Nicholls Nursery, Gorge Road, Sedgley. They were married at St Peter's Church, in Upper Gornal, before having the reception at the Guild Hall in Upper Gornal.

The couple have two daughters Elaine and Jeanette, four grandchildren and a great grandson called Dexter aged two. "It has been nice to celebrate the anniversary with our family," Mrs Price said.

Site cleared for £6m hotel

A FORMER factory has been flattened to make way for a £6 million hotel and restaurant aimed at boosting tourism in Stourbridge.

Demolition work is taking place at the former Cox Hire premises in Birmingham Street. Buildings on the four-acre site - used for many years by the firm before it relocated to Netherton - have been reduced to rubble.

Contractors from DSM Demolition, which recently pulled down the Bell Street multi-storey car park to make way for the new Tesco supermarket,

have been working on site. Once it has been cleared, construction work will start on the 80-bedroom Premier Inn and Brewers Fayre restaurant. It is due to be completed by spring 2014.

The scheme is a joint venture between Barberrys Developments, Whitbread Hotels and Restaurants, and Cox Hire Ltd. Barberrys managing director Jon Bellfield said the site was an ideal location for a scheme of this kind.

"It is well-positioned for people to explore the Black Country and the surrounding countryside," he said. "The scheme will create new jobs,

attract additional visitors and help to support existing businesses in the area."

Spokesman for Whitbread Hotels and Restaurants John Bates said: "The new hotel in Stourbridge complements others we are soon to open in nearby areas, including Dudley. We are looking forward to opening our doors to customers in spring 2014."

Dudley Council granted permission for the hotel, which will be built in an L-shape at a height of four-stories, earlier this year. Talks are currently taking place with potential drive-through operators for the site.

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NEWS

Photo sparks three stone weight loss



The picture of Laura Wade which made her lose weight



A slimmer Laura after losing more than three stones

WHEN Laura Wade saw an unflattering photograph taken of herself at a friend's wedding, she decided it was time to shed the pounds.

So the 29-year-old from Stourbridge joined a slimming class – and is now showing off her new slimline figure after losing more than three stones in 12 months.

The community worker is enjoying a new lease of life thanks to her regime and is now vowing to help others in the same boat.

She says she had piled on the pounds after starting university where she binged on junk food because it was cheap.

After graduating, she continued

with the bad habits she had fallen into with friends, which included snacking on chocolate. In the end her GP told her to lose weight after she hit the scales at 15st 11lb.

"I realised I needed to do something, and a bad photo at a friend's wedding sealed the deal," she said.

Her doctor recommended she joined a slimming class but Laura, who was previously a size 16, was sceptical.

"I'd seen a lot of people I know try to diet, only to pile it all back on again a few months later when they got tired of counting calories and feeling deprived."

But she stuck with it and changed her eating habits to include healthier

meals with more fruit and veg while still allowing herself some treats.

Laura, who is now a size 10 and attends Kerry Morgan's Slimming World group in Oldswinford, said: "I still enjoy eating out."

"Curry is my absolute favourite but I also love fish and chips. You can include these meals in your week without feeling guilty."

She is now running her own group at the Ridge Primary School, Wollaston, on Monday at 7pm. "I want to show other people that yes, you can be slimmer, you can stay slim, and you can enjoy the journey," she said.

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Engineering a career for Ryan at leading water-blasting specialist

A STOURBRIDGE student is hoping to make a splash in the engineering industry after securing an apprenticeship at a leading manufacturer of water-blasting equipment.

Nineteen-year-old Ryan Cuff beat off lots of competition from 26 other candidates to land a two-year placement at Halesowen firm Jetstream Europe Ltd, which supplies

equipment to the oil and gas sector. Mr Cuff, who is studying automotive maintenance and repair at Walsall College, has been learning how the company's equipment works at their manufacturing facility at Halesowen Industrial Park.

He said: "It is great to get my first taste of employment with a company that is willing to invest time and money making sure I get a first class apprenticeship in engineering."

"I hope to be hired permanently

at the end of my placement." Danny Monaghan, technical & UK operations manager at Jetstream Europe, said: "We are committed to providing employment opportunities for local people."

"I am sure Ryan has a successful career ahead of him here."

"Apprenticeships are a great way for us to develop young talent, but we are also looking for experienced people to help drive the business forward."



Apprentice Ryan Cuff, left, seen with Craig Chaplin, who is the workshop manager at Jetstream Europe

Students on construction course build up their CVs

TWO Stourbridge College construction students got a foot in the door with a national construction company gaining vital work experience. The stint with Speller Metcalfe was organised through the college's Black Country Skills Shop, based at Merry Hill.

Plastering student Jamie Stokes and carpentry and joinery student Ashley Dunford, both based at Stourbridge College's Centre of Excellence for Construction & Building Services in Brierley Hill, were offered the chance to work on a building project in Dudley town centre with Speller Metcalfe.

The project they were involved in was the refurbishment of the old Cop building in High Street to provide

premises for United Footwear. The students worked on a variety of tasks, including external repair and reinstatement, render renewal and overhauling the shop front.

Jamie, aged 18, from Cradley Heath, said: "I've completed my Level 1 and 2 in plastering at Stourbridge College and will be looking for employment soon."

"Any work experience is great to include on my CV."

And Ashley, aged 18, from Wollascoe, Stourbridge, said: "Stourbridge College has a really good reputation locally for its construction courses and now that I've completed Level 1 and 2 in carpentry and joinery, I'm starting my Level 3 in September."

Private glass goes on public display



Assistant Julie Nicholls with part of the collection

ORNATE glass pieces including goblets and candlesticks, have gone on display for the first time at Kingswinford's Broadfield House Glass Museum. For years the Roger Pilkington glass collection, featuring pieces dating back to the 1600s, was in the hands of a private collector.

In recent years it has been in the care of Sotheby's, the auction house, and this is the first time it has been on display to the public. Roger Pilkington, who died in 1969, put together the collection during the 1960s.

He was a distant relation of the famous Pilkington Lancashire glass manufacturers and this family connection sparked his interest in antique glass. His main interest was in early 18th century colourless drinking glasses, so-called 'balusters', but he also loved glass candlesticks.

Commemorating

Glass rarities from different periods of history are also part of the collection. There is a Jacobite 'Amen' glass, one of only 40 left in the world, a gilded snuff bottle commemorating the Prince of Wales and the Glassmakers' Friendly Society goblet aged from around 1850 with a glassmaking scene signed by the engraver Augustin Conne.

Dudley's culture chief, Councillor Tracy Wood, said: "We are really privileged to have this collection on loan."

Broadfield House Glass Museum, Compton Drive, is open Tuesday to Sunday from noon to 4pm. Admission is free.

Npower in talks with staff on office threat

ENERGY supplier Npower is forging ahead with plans to close its offices in Kingswinford. It's talking to staff about relocating many of them from the base in High Street.

No official date has yet been announced for the closure, but it is expected by the end of this year, with many of the workers leaving in September. The decision to close the base, which has 284 workers, was announced last year by the firm as part of a review carried out by parent company RWE. Workers are expected to be relocated to the firm's other IT call centres, including the firm's headquarters in Worcester. The firm has not yet announced whether there will be redundancies.

Alex Madden, spokesman for Npower, said: "We have relocated a number of employees from Kingswinford who will be moving to other offices within the Midlands."

Dudley South MP Chris Kelly said he wanted to be kept informed of the plans, adding: "We obviously have concerns for the local economy and it's important I know what's going on."

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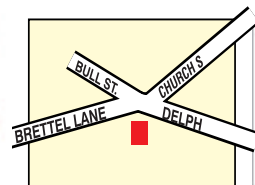
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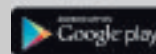


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NEWS

Drive-ban beauty queen Ruby calls for new laws

Legion gets life-saving gear



First Responder Emily Bennett and Legion chairman George Dudley

LIFE-SAVING equipment has been donated to a Dudley community.

A defibrillator has been installed at the Royal British Legion building, in Summerhill, Kingswinford, for use by residents in an emergency.

An open day was held there recently and visitors were given the chance to learn life-saving techniques.

The defibrillator has been donated by West Midlands Ambulance Service and South Staffordshire First Responders.

It is located in a yellow box at the front of the building. People who need to use the equipment in an emergency first call 999. They are then given the code to unlock the

box. Emily Bennett, aged 26, from Kingswinford, who is both a first responder and a member of the legion, said: "I approached the club to see if they would be interested in housing the defibrillator."

"They were really pleased to do so. There have been incidents in the past where someone has gone into cardiac arrest while in the town."

"The legion building is the perfect location as everyone knows where it is."

Retired firefighter and chairman of Kingswinford Royal British Legion George Dudley, 74, said: "This is not only as an asset to the club but the community as a whole."

BEAUTY queen Ruby Bowater is calling for new laws banning motorists from drinking any alcohol before getting behind the wheel - after she was caught drink-driving.

Eighteen-year-old Miss Bowater, the current Miss West Midlands, has been banned from driving for a year and fined £110 by Dudley magistrates after admitting being over the limit. She claims she had drunk just one Southern Comfort and coke all night but her reading was still 110mg alcohol in 100ml of blood - the legal limit is 80mg.

And she said a zero limit was the only way to avoid the confusion which landed her in court, where she was also ordered to pay £85 costs and a £20 victim surcharge.

Miss Bowater, of Weavers Rise, Netherton, whose great uncle was killed in an accident with a driver under the influence of alcohol, said: "I was really shocked when I found I was over the limit - I couldn't believe it."

"People who know me know that I am not a big drinker - I do a lot of charity work and, as a beauty queen, I am a role model and I don't get out and get off my face."

"I had just one Southern Comfort and it was more than five hours later when the police stopped me."

"The law should be changed so that one drink is too much," said the former Halesowen College student, who passed her driving test less than six months ago.

"There should be zero tolerance," she added.



Ruby Bowater

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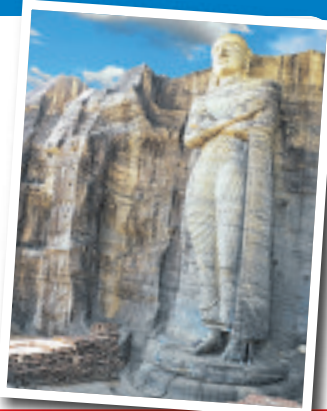
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One of the first adventures on the itinerary is the famous Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage which boasts a herd of over 75 animals from matriarchs to calves and their daily bath in the river provides a stunning photo opportunity.

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The overwhelming image of Vietnam is that of a country blessed with extraordinary beauty and the friendly Vietnamese always courteous and proud to show of their wonderful country.

In Cambodia you can experience the haunting soft morning light rise over the eerie temples of Angkor. Then later discover the huge fortified 13th century city of Angkor Thom, with its five monumental gates, and 300ft wide moat – its centre containing one of Angkor's most remarkable sites, the temple of Bayon.

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NEWS

Two businesses open up for trade at attraction



Senior Sales Assistant Kerry Cooper at the new Stourbridge Crystal Glass Centre in High Street, Wordsley



Jaki Thompson who has started a business called Mamma's Workshop in the Red House Glass Cone, Stourbridge

A LANDMARK glass factory in Wordsley has been given a boost with the launch of two new businesses.

Crystal glass is once again being sold at the Red House Glass Cone following the launch of the Stourbridge Crystal Glass Centre at the former Stuart Crystal Factory Shop.

Long-running firm Brierley Hill Crystal recently took over the unit at the entrance to the cone on High Street and is now trading.

And a new sewing business has also opened up at the cone which will offer workshops to people wanting to learn more about the technique.

The firm, called Mamma's Workshop, has been launched by former Dudley and Stourbridge College tutor

Jaki Thompson, of Brierley Hill, who will also make and sell items from the unit.

Bosses at the attraction said both businesses were major additions to the site. Brierley Hill Crystal managing director Darryll Hemmings said the centre had been set up to mark the centenary of his family's business.

It will sell items created at the firm's factory, in Pedmore Road, Brierley Hill. All pieces are individually hand-blown and cut.

Perfect

Engraver Carl Palmer, formerly of Royal Brierley Crystal, is working from the shop.

Mr Hemmings, aged 44, said: "We wanted to do something to celebrate the centenary of the business and what better way than to open a shop here at

the cone. The site is well known for its glass heritage and was perfect for what we were looking for.

"Having Carl on board as our engraver really brings everything full circle as we were able to sell glass of this kind on a site which shares its history."

The company has created special glass tankards to mark the birth of the Prince of Cambridge last week.

The Stuart Crystal shop closed in 2009.

Jaki Thompson, aged 61, said she had been inspired to launch her business by her daughter Kate.

"Previously I was a sewing teacher working at Dudley and Stourbridge College. It really started a few years ago when my daughter Kate celebrated her 21st birthday," she said.

Dedication of volunteers rewarded by the Queen



Peter Tomlinson, centre, presents the award to Susan Wallin, left, and Deputy Mayor Margaret Aston

VOLUNTEERS have been honoured by the Queen for their dedication in helping young performers stage shows up and down the country.

Members of the Side by Side Theatre Company were presented with the prestigious Queen's Award for Voluntary Service at a ceremony.

It was led by Deputy Lieutenant for the West Midlands Peter Tomlinson, who handed the award and a certificate to Susan Wallin who founded the theatre group 16 years ago. The cere-

mony was held at Stourbridge Tennis Club and attended by Dudley's deputy mayor Councillor Margaret Aston.

The award honours the work of all 44 volunteers who work tirelessly throughout the year helping to stage performances.

Dancing

Side by Side works with disabled youngsters to develop their acting and dancing skills through regular shows.

It has been honoured with a number of awards over the years.

The group was nominated for the accolade by the Dudley Council for Voluntary Service. Mr Tomlinson came

out to visit the group after it made the shortlist for the award to talk to volunteers before making a recommendation on whether it should receive the award.

"Generally we are asked to write only a paragraph on each group," he said.

"However, I wrote far more than that for Side by Side."

"The award is basically the equivalent of an MBE but for groups rather than a single person."

Mrs Wallin, who received an MBE earlier this year, said all of the group were over the moon.

CLUB NEWS

Art class in trip to gardens

WOLLASTON 'E' TWG

NO official business was discussed at the July meeting as it was the annual strawberry tea to which chairman Jean Latham welcomed approximately 50 members.

Everyone agreed it was a grand 'do' and thanks go to Sainsbury's for the donation towards the cost of the food, also to members of the committee for all the preparation work.

This was followed by a fiercely fought game of beetle, won by the Marion Breeze team. There was a huge raffle and numerous members left with prizes.

Thirteen floral art class members went by minibus to Hampton Court Castle Gardens, Leominster, where they enjoyed a lovely day, taking lunch and afternoon tea in glorious sunshine.

The bowling section are well into the season and are now beginning the quarter finals of the competition. Monies collected from the Macmillan Walk amounted to £203 and thanks go to all who contributed and to Jean Dunne who organised the apres walk meal.

The cost for the Harvest Supper on October 16 are also being taken.

On September 10, Adrienne Jennett will speak on the West Midlands Fire Service, the competition being a Fire Service related item.

MP invited to club's three-course dinner



Ann Rogers, speaker Patrick Harley, chairman Mary Jones and Chris. Kelly MP

At the July meeting chairman Mary Jones welcomed 36 members, speaker Patrick Harley and Dudley South MP Chris Kelly for a three-course lunch at the Kingfisher Hotel, Wall Heath.

Mr Harley was excellent and described the remarkable life of Frank Sinatra.

The Kingfisher Hotel is undergoing major refurbishment and both the improvements and the meal proved very popular. There is

DUDLEY SOUTH LADIES LUNCHEON CLUB

no luncheon in August but members are invited to Ann & Mike Rogers' home for a coffee morning on August 9 from 10.30am.

September's speaker is Sue Clegg on the fingerprinting and in October the Rev Stephen Buckley on 'From Stage to Pulpit'.

Judges address meeting

THE Black Country Fuchsia Society's monthly meeting took place on Tuesday July 30.

Special guests were two judges, Nancy and Arthur Phillips. They were also judging at the club's annual

BLACK COUNTRY FUCHSIA SOCIETY

show last Saturday, August 3 at Pool Hayes Community School in castle Drive, Willenhall.

They gave a talk on what the judges look for in a plant,

and answered questions from the audience. Meetings take place at Corpus Christi Social Centre, Griffiths Drive, Ashmore Park, Wednesfield.

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The veterinary world has been reminded of the need to encourage owners to vaccinate their pets and ensure they are boosted annually. This plea follows reports of outbreaks of potentially fatal diseases in certain areas of the Midlands and beyond. If it should become apparent that your pet dog or cat has not had a booster in the last 18 months it will be vulnerable to dangerous diseases that are difficult to treat but highly preventable. With this in mind vet practice Clent Hills are offering an amnesty during August where cats and dogs can get the complete course of 2 vaccinations for the cost of 1 booster.

Practice partner Alun Edwards commented, "It is sad that we are still seeing pets with diseases that are preventable with a regular vaccination. Parvovirus is particularly unpleasant where many of those affected will not pull through despite intensive veterinary care. This disease can be easily spread via dog faeces, dog to dog contact or

even on shoes. Rats and other rodents are carriers of Leptospirosis, a disease potentially fatal to dogs but also a risk to people who are exposed to infection. Any dog that exercises outdoors is at risk."

Alun continues "Of course vaccination is only part of the preventive health picture, if dogs are missing vaccination boosters; they are also losing out on the opportunity for general health checks. As vets we are trained to help sick and injured animals but preventive care has to be the best care and regular vaccinations and health checks are by far the best way an owner can actively help their dog's long term health."

If you would like to take advantage of the August Vaccination amnesty or have any concerns regarding the vaccination status of your pet please contact Clent Hills Veterinary Group at either their new Bromsgrove or Hagley surgery.

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WIDOW young hearted 70's, N/S, likes reading, concerts, gardening, meals out, WLTW younger gentleman with similar interests. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404177

MARIA 38, blonde, 5ft 5ins, caring, likes nights in/out, seeks caring male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 329319

NAT easygoing pretty, honest 24yrs, enjoys cosy nights in, romantic walks, holidaying, keeping fit, WLTW fun, loving, energetic male, looks/age unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406117

SUSAN 34 attractive looking to find that special connection with a nice guy who would enjoy spending good times with me and share new interests. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406109

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SINGLE female, 43, seeks kind, considerate male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406449

PAULINE 36 intelligent easygoing female with GSOH looking for nice guy who wants to get know and connect with me, enjoys meals in/out, music and more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406373

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SARAH 24, brunette, brown eyes, attractive, slim, smart, seeks male with GSOH, 30's in Kidderminster area for LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406139

YOUNG looking, pretty female, 40, brunette, slim, no ties, N/S, seeks attractive, refined male for friendship/relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 313115

JANICE 40, 5ft 5ins, medium build, brown eyes, likes music, cooking, cosy nights in/out, seeks similar male for LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397407

CARLA 41, brown hair/eyes, 5ft 2ins, loving, seeking male who likes walks, cinema and romantic meals. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 396127

ATTRACTIVE lady, GSOH, slim, dark hair, 50's, likes walks, films, art, meals out, seeks male with GSOH and similar interests for friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399245

FUN loving lady, outgoing, honest, caring, likes socialising, seeks older male, 50-70. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 383325

KIND romantic female, 50, seeking a male to talk, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 368429

SHAZ 33 easygoing voluptuous black female with lovely smile and personality to match, loves music, keeping fit and looking good, WLTW appreciative guy. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404819

62YR old female, widowed, small, slim, attractive, kind, outgoing, likes meals out, dancing, holidays, nights in, seeking professional gent. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 394106

SUSIE fun loving mum with GSOH seeks gentle considerate to get to know better. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404627

JANE 48yrs West Midlands, likes meals out, cinema, theatre, looking for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403949

PAT 67, attractive, likes reading, holidays, seeking female, 65-72 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405985

SHELLEY 48, 5ft 5ins, brunette, seeking discreet relationship with male 48-52 for friendship/companionship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405795

MANDY 36, size 10 but busty, looking for discreet relationship with open-minded man. Status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 360317

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CHRISTINA 38 very pretty petite trainee nurse looking for N/S male companionship to enjoy meals/drinks out, leading to more maybe. Age/looks and status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405243

MANDY friendly outgoing arty female who loves wine/dining, looking for male to sweep me off my feet, take me out and make me feel special, reciprocation guaranteed. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405229

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GALE 52, blonde hair, 5ft 2ins, likes nights out, seeks N/S male, 50-60 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 402041

LIZ 42, black, divorced, seeking male, 44-54 for kind, sincere, honest, open relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400949

CLARE 38, single mum, curvy hour glass, loves to be tactile, OHAC, WLTW caring male for LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399047

CAROLINE attractive, kind, caring, 43, seeking kind, caring male for LTR, 45-50. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 396837

35YR old female, seeks intelligent, down to earth male, 50-75 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 388297

I am Tracy 39yr old young chatty single female looking for older male to look after me and show me some much needed attention with discretion and no ties. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405293

REBECCA tall slim elegant long legged romantic, sensual, professional, lots to offer, seeks similar male who also appreciates the finer things in life. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405281

VOLUPTUOUS big hearted brunette, Maria, 36, loves music, seeks someone special to show her what she's missing. Status unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 346785

JANE attractive, seeking male for fun and friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403807

BLONDE tanned female, trendy, 46, GSOH, likes walks, pubs, nights in, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 384852

MARIA petite curvy brunette, into keep fit, running, beauty, looking for nice genuine tall N/S guy with no ties for fun adult companionship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405099

SALLY 37 blonde blue eyed bombshell who loves life, music, letting my hair down, looking for similar flirty guy for enjoy TLC and life. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405203

LOUISE 43, 5ft 5ins, medium build, average looks, likes reading, meals out, cinema, theatre, quiet pubs, honest, genuine, kind, caring, GSOH, seeks male, 42-58. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 391308

KIND loving lady 43, slight disability, seeks genuine male for romance. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 391863

BLONDE attractive, educated lady, tall, slim, curvy, 47, seeks tall, professional, 40-52. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 362478

GENUINE female, 36, brunette, blue eyes, 5ft 7ins, fun, outgoing, adventurous, GSOH, looking for tall, honest, genuine male for good company, dates and romance. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 388327

YVONNE looking for Christian male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 391135

FEMALE looking for stocky male, 50-60 to share a happy life. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 386169

BLACK attractive female, 34, slim, N/S, seeks genuine male for friendship, maybe more. Holby. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 367021

PATRICIA 5ft 5ins, red hair, blue eyes, likes nights out, meals, clubs, seeking nice young man who is kind, generous to look after me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 378207

LITTLE bit nice and definitely a little bit naughty! Imaginative curvy blond seeks male for kisses and cuddles. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 363428

SLIM fit, bubbly female can't wait to meet a tall, slim, fit, mature male who thinks he can keep up. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 367066

CURVY red haired female, been hurt in the past seeks older male to buy her flowers and mend her broken heart. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 377432

61YR old lady 5ft 2ins, medium build, long dark hair, smoker, seeks smart gent who wants to get out and about for good times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 396409

DAWN attractive, slim female, 45, N/S, no ties, WLTW tall, fit male with get up and go attitude towards life. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 375825

VANESSA fun loving single mum, 5ft 4ins, brown eyes, seeks kind, loving, genuine male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 304135

ATTRACTIVE female, 42, slim, brunette, no ties, N/S, likes travel, nights out, weekends away, seeks slim male for possible relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 327579

SARAH 23, attractive, brunette, slim, looking for male for LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 392979

WIDOW seeking similar aged male to share holidays and weekends out. Car owner preferred. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 389795

IRENE 55, blonde hair, brown eyes, loving, caring, genuine, N/S, lots of love to give, seeks male, 55-60 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 392807

MADELINE 5ft black, seeks male 26-41 with GSOH for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 375789

LOVING caring young 68yr old female, 5ft 2ins, slim-medium build, size 12, smoker, seeks slim, well-dressed guy with GSOH for LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 399923

BIG bubbly black female, single mum, looking for male for nights in and out. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 392501

GRACE Jones lookalike, black lady, 53, 5ft 11ins, OHAC, WLTW male, 45-65, 6ft plus for relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397681

BIG is beautiful! Voluptuous, sensual female looking for someone to share a life time of happiness with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 368528

LONG haired blonde, 37, enjoys meals out but would love to cook a romantic meal for the man of her dreams. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 361076

TALL curvy female, 36dd, loves music, looking for fun and romance with dark male. Give me a call. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 359238

SUE 5ft 2ins female, brown hair/eyes, loving, likes music, socialising, films, good times, seeks male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 393223

CARING lady, 52, brown hair/eyes, seeks male, 30-60 for socialising, meals out, cinema, music, sports and having a laugh. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 392883

FUN loving lady, 56, outgoing, honest, caring, seeks caring male, 55-60 for friendship, possible relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 391192

5FT 1ins female, brown hair, blue eyes, medium build, seeks male, 40-50, honest, caring, trustworthy, down to earth and bubbly. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 386741

33YR old busty black haired, medium built, 5ft 3ins female seeking stocky male. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 389799

SINGLE MEN

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.53 per minute plus network extras. Texts cost £1.50 per message sent.

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(T&C's below)

KEVIN 40, stocky, 6ft 2ins, dark hair, likes nights in/out, seeks female, 35-50 for fun and relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406773

MARK 45 6ft, blue eyes, dark hair, slim, likes sports, cinema, meals out, seeking loving, caring female to share life with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406737

COLIN 5ft 8ins, dark hair, brown eyes, likes pubs, walks, dvds, holidays, seeks nice lady for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406677

MATT nice build, likes cycling, clubs, looking for fit, sexy female for fun times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406727

PROFESSIONAL local businessman, 40 tall, blue eyes, likes sports, music, seeks professional slim lady for romantic meals, evenings out. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406717

ARE you a black princess? 48yr old sporty white male, 5ft 11ins, likes holidays, cinema, meals out, would like to take you out. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406551

MALE seeking female, 40-55, discretion assured, status unimportant for daytime meets. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406433

SHARP dressed man, mature, fun, seeks smart, size 10 lady, any age for friendship and relationship. Hereford. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405323

58YR old male, likes nights in/out, looking for N/S female, 40-60 for companionship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405975

JOSEPH 40 tall, GSOH, seeks female, 26-48 for fun and relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 394103

DAVE genuine guy, 6ft, black hair, blue eyes, medium build, likes sports, gardening, music, seeks female with GSOH and genuine. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 388372

38YR old farm worker, medium build, seeks female of similar age for nights in and out. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406331

ATTRACTIVE tall, professional male, GSOH, easy going, likes sport, socialising, seeks female for fun and live life. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406317

CHRIS 45, genuine, honest, caring, N/S, likes cinema, theatre, socialising, seeks genuine, N/S female, 38-45, single mum welcome for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406295

46YR old stocky male, no ties, shaved head, likes walks, meals out, motor bikes, seeking female for relationship, are you the one? Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406291

SLIM attractive man 51, GSOH, WLTW lady 45-55 for evenings out and friendship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406259

BROADMINDED 67yr old black male, GSOH, caring, loving, seeks lady, 62-69 for friendship and adult fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406257

MAURICE 50's, seeking N/S female for nights out, friendship and maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 400425

STRICTLY come dancing. Male 52, trendy, honest, caring, down to earth, fun loving, seeks petite lady, 45-54. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397163

MALE 50, fit, friendly, down to earth, broadminded, seeks bored female for discreet fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 372407

GENUINE 56yr old male, divorced, OHAC, looking for nice lady for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405551

JIMMY 53 good looking, fit, genuine, honest, very loving and looking for the same in a woman. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397157

ROUGH diamond 45 looking for older lady, the older the better, for fun times, can accommodate, let me entertain you. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404437

GEOFF 60's, tall, seeking nice lady for fun, friendship, relationship, maybe more. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406077

PAUL 46, brown/blond hair, 6ft, slim, single dad, genuine, down to earth, fun loving, kind, caring, likes most things seeking female for love. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406007

PAUL 60, seeks attractive Wolverhampton lady for discreet, naughty daytime fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405699

PHIL 55, divorced, 5ft 10ins, slim, OHAC, seeks female, 18 plus for discreet adult fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 401875

MALE 45, 5ft 9ins, slim, caring, loyal, GSOH, WLTW female, 35-45 for friendship/LTR. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 402493

GARY 39 seeks female 30-50 for fun, maybe relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404487

TALL blue eyed 49yr old gent, N/S looking for soul mate, slim lady with no ties and plenty of love to give and receive, is that you? Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 404121

GENUINE male, 54, own home, seeks female, any age for discreet fun. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 368871

MALE 39, 6ft 2ins, honest, loyal, caring nature, seeks similar female with view to permanent, loving relationship. Tel No: 0906 500 3955

What's On! Stourbridge

Party at the Love Shack

THE American band who dazzled the 1980s pop scene with their party music and sci-fi retro 60s stylings, The B-52s, are making a rare UK appearance in Birmingham this summer.

The original trio of Fred Schneider, Kate Pierson and Cindy Wilson, who with wonderful immodesty have dubbed themselves 'the world's greatest party band', have a gig at Birmingham's O2 Academy on Thursday, August 15.

Survived

The band from Athens, Georgia, exploded onto the scene at the close of the 1970s with quirky surf punk number Rock Lobster and went on to have hits with Give Me Back My Man, Love Shack and Room. Kate is also known for guest vocals on tracks by REM and Iggy Pop.

The group survived the death of guitarist Ricky Wilson, Cindy's brother, and came back in 2008 with Funplex, their first album in 16 years.

Fifth member Keith Strickland no longer tours but the crucial three will be joined by a band set to include former Duran Duran and Bowie drummer Sterling Campbell, ex-Waitresses member and bassist Tracy Wormworth and keyboardist Paul Gordon. The latter's pop trivia claim to fame is that he wrote the theme music for Transformers, Robots in Disguise.

Call the venue or visit its website for further details.

Comic Ed enters middle age in his roaring 40s

CRITICALLY-acclaimed stand-up comedian Ed Byrne is embracing middle-age as he reaches his roaring 40s.

A self-confessed 'miserable old git' since the age of 23, the Irish funnyman is urging fans to join him as he truly comes of age. While for some, this may mean the purchase of a sports car, Byrne is taking a different outlook, as he lets out his battle cry of: "I am in my 40s, hear me roar."

A regular on panel shows like Mock The Week, Byrne has previously performed at major comedy venues.

His Different Class show enjoyed a full run at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2008, following on from the success of his Standing Up Falling Down tour, which was the festival's biggest-selling comedy show in 2006.

Presenter

Byrne has also performed at top comedy clubs in New York and Los Angeles. He has made five appearances on NBC's Late Night With Conan O'Brien and has been a presenter on RTE's Ed Byrne's Just for Laughs, which ran for four series.

Acting credits include playing a grungy teenager in a Christmas special of Father Ted. Byrne's tour takes in three dates in the West Midlands, beginning with Dudley Concert Hall on



Embracing 40 - Ed Byrne

October 13, 01384 812812; The Symphony Hall, Birmingham, follows on October 25, call 0121 345 0600; ahead of a gig at Wolverhampton's Civic Hall on February 22, call 0870 320 7000.

Oh, what a show as an icon returns

POP star turned theatre star Marti Pellow plays revolutionary Che Guevara, the cynical narrator in the latest revival of Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber's classic musical Evita.

The former singer with 1980s hitmakers Wet Wet Wet is stepping into a role previously played by David Essex and, on film, by Antonio Banderas.

The show is staged at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre from Monday, August 19, to Saturday, August 31.

Playing Eva Peron, the iconic wife of 1940s and 50s Argentine dictator Juan Peron, the role that made Elaine Paige a star and played by Madonna on screen, is Portuguese singer and actress Madalena Alberto. Her previous stage roles include playing Edith Piaf and as Fantine in the 25th anniversary production of Les Miserables.

Pellow has had successes in the musicals Chess, Chicago, Blood Brothers and Jekyll & Hyde.

Evita's famous songs include Don't Cry For Me Argentina, Oh What A Circus, You Must Love Me and Another Suitcase in Another Hall. Call 01902 429212.



Marti Pellow as Che and Madalena Alberto as Eva Peron in Evita
Picture: Keith Pattison

Soul legend at Bilston venue

BEN E King, the soul legend whose biggest hit, Stand By Me, has become an American classic, is in concert at Bilston's Robin 2 venue on Sunday, September 8.

And fans of soul music are in for a two-for-the-price-of-one treat as the 74-year-old singer will be joined by Jimmy James and the Vagabonds, one of the UK's favourite live bands in the 1960s.

The 72-year-old from Jamaica had hits with Red Red Wine in '68, also I'll Go Where Your Music Takes Me and Now Is The Time during the disco boom of the mid-1970s.

Meanwhile, former Drifters member King's other solo hits include Spanish Harlem, and he had previously sung on Drifters hits There Goes My Baby and Save The Last Dance For Me.

Contact the box office at the Mount Pleasant venue on 01902 401211.

Caro in rapid return to Brum

DUTCH pop star Caro Emerald's vintage style is in much demand, as is her jazzy brand of dance pop.

In fact, second album The Shocking Miss Emerald has been such a big success that she has two Birmingham concerts in the coming months.

Demand was so great for her gig at the Symphony Hall on September 16 that she's back to play the NIA on March 22.

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What's On!

SATURDAY'S TV 10.08.13

Listings supplied by Press Association

CHOICE



Keri Russell

The Americans

ITV, 9.50pm
If you want to make a hit American saga, you need at least one protagonist with a dark secret who's keeping their crimes under wraps. Like Dexter and Breaking Bad, that reliable formula has also worked a treat for this series. In the latest offering, Elizabeth (Keri Russell) is bent on revenge after learning of the assassination of a Soviet General whom she knew from her formative years as an agent. Phillip (Matthew Rhys) offers to help while taking a step forward in their separation. The question is: has their teamwork given the FBI a clue as to their identity?

BBC1

6.00 Athletics: World Championships. **9.30** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.00** BBC News: Regional News; Weather. **11.15** Athletics: World Championships.
6.30 BBC News: Regional News; Weather.
6.45 **That Puppet Game Show.** New series. Family entertainment show in which two celebrities, beginning with Jonathan Ross and Katherine Jenkins, compete in a number of challenges hosted by a group of puppets.
7.30 **I Love My Country.** Melanie C, Chelsea Healey, Jonnie Peacock, Christine Bleakley, Larry Lamb and Len Goodman demonstrate their knowledge of all things British.
8.20 **The National Lottery: Break the Safe.** Nick Knowles hosts the game show in which three pairs compete in several quiz rounds. Includes the National Lottery results, presented by Matt Johnson.
9.10 **Casualty.** Part one of two. New nurse Rita is late for her first shift when she deals with an injured neighbour, while Jamie bonds with an asylum seeker too scared to reveal he is gay.
10.00 **Michael McIntyre's Boys.** Newlyweds Dermot and Maria argue. (R)
10.30 **BBC News:** Weather; National Lottery Update.
11.00 **Michael McIntyre's Comedy Roadshow.** Featuring Jason Manford, John Bishop, Sarah Millican and Mick Ferry. (R)
11.35 **The Football League Show.**
12.50 Weatherview. **12.55** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 This Is BBC Two. **6.30** **Film:** China Sky. (1945) **7.45** **Film:** Pot O' Gold. (1941) **9.40** **Film:** The Private Life of Plants. (1980) **10.30** Athletics: World Championships. **11.15** University Challenge. (R) **11.45** The Sky at Night. (R) **12.05** **Film:** Carve Her Name with Pride. (1958) **2.00** Escape to the Country. (R) **2.30** Exploring China: A Culinary Adventure. (R) **3.30** Wild China. (R) **4.30** Final Score. **5.15** Flog It! (R)
6.00 **Natural World – Sri Lanka: Elephant Island.** Wildlife cameraman Martyn Colbeck travels to the diverse country to study its elephants, a subspecies of the Asian genus which have their own unique characteristics. (R)
7.00 **Proms Extra 2013.** Including a review of Mitsuko Uchida's performance of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No 4.
7.40 **Dad's Army.** Mainwaring tries to get equipment for the troops. (R)
8.10 **David Starkey's Music & Monarchy.** The historian examines the Crown's rediscovery of the power of pageantry and ceremony and the revival of British music in the 19th and 20th centuries. Last in the series.
9.10 **Top of the Lake.** Robin suspects one of Tui's friends is stealing food for her and could be the baby's father, while Matt Mitcham sends a posse of hunters into the Bush to find his daughter.
10.10 **Qi XL.** With Nina Conti, Sean Lock and Jill Bailey. (R)
10.55 **Film:** Hamlet 2. (2008) Comedy, with Steve Coogan.
12.20 **Film:** Tsotsi. (2005) **1.45** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Jake and the Neverland Pirates. **6.15** Jake and the Neverland Pirates. **6.25** Poppy Cat. **6.40** Poppy Cat. **6.50** Animals. (R) **7.00** Animals. (R) **7.10** Bookaboo. (R) **7.20** Kick Butowski – Suburban Daredevil. **7.35** The Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes. **8.00** Gravity Falls. **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Dinner Date. (R) **9.25** Saturday Cookbook. (R) **10.20** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **11.20** Saturday Farm. **12.20** Countrywise. (R) **12.35** ITV News; Weather. **12.40** All Star Mr & Mrs. (R) **1.45** **Film:** Smokey and the Bandit. (1977) **3.30** Midsomer Murders. (R) **5.30** Regional Programme: Weather. **5.45** ITV News; Weather.
6.00 **You've Been Framed!** Harry Hill narrates a comical selection of mishaps filmed by viewers, featuring performing tots and a countdown of five teenagers in pain. (R)
6.30 **You've Been Framed!** Featuring fun in the sun. (R)
7.00 **Film:** Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire. (2005) The teenage wizard is chosen to represent Hogwarts School in a dangerous magical tournament. Fantasy, starring Daniel Radcliffe.
9.50 **The Americans.** When a fellow KGB officer is assassinated, Elizabeth takes matters into her own hands and plots revenge on the CIA bureaucrat responsible for giving the kill order.
10.45 **ITV News:** Weather.
11.00 **Film:** Public Enemies. (2009) Fact-based crime drama, starring Johnny Depp and Christian Bale.
1.30 Jackpot247. **3.00** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. **3.45** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.10 The Treacle People. (R) **6.20** The Hoobs. (R) **6.45** VW Racing Cup. **7.10** The Grid. **7.40** FIM Superbike World Championship. **8.10** The Morning Line. **9.10** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.40** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **10.10** Frasier. (R) **10.40** Frasier. (R) **11.10** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.40** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.10** The Simpsons. (R) **12.45** Undercover Boss Canada. (R) **1.45** Channel 4 Racing. **4.10** Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.40** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.10** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.40** Come Dine with Me. (R)
6.10 **Come Dine with Me.** Admin worker Jessica Carroll hosts the final party in Lincolnshire. Despite a lack of culinary knowledge, she hopes her Chinese meal and unusual pet will impress the guests. (R)
6.40 **Channel 4 News.**
7.00 **Grand Designs.** Kevin McCloud catches up with architectural designer Lincoln Miles and his wife, artist Lisa Tisdale, who transformed a 1970s bungalow on the Isle of Wight. (R)
8.00 **Film: Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen.** (2009) The shape-changing robots fight for control of a machine hidden somewhere on Earth with the power to destroy planets. Sci-fi adventure sequel, with Shia LaBeouf and Megan Fox.
10.50 **Film: Braveheart.** (1995) Oscar-winning historical epic, directed by and starring Mel Gibson.
2.05 Holyoaks. (R) **4.05** Deal or No Deal: Deafest. (R) **5.00** Countdown. (R) **5.45** Baking Mad with Eric Lanlard. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.15** Power Rangers: Megaforce. **10.50** Sluggers. **11.10** Inside Hollywood. **11.15** Big Brother: Live Eviction. (R) **12.45** World's Busiest Train Station. (R) **1.45** **Film:** Hell Boats. (1970) **3.40** **Film:** Columbo: A Bird in the Hand. (1992) **5.30** **Film:** Jesse Stone: Innocents Lost. (2011)
7.00 **Cricket: The Ashes.** England v Australia. Mark Nicholas presents action from the second day of the Fourth Test at the Emirates Durham International Cricket Ground, where the five-match series continued.
8.00 **NCIS.** The murder of a marine during a cruise is investigated by the agents, who discover the victim had turned his back on a life of privilege to join the military. (R)
8.55 **NCIS.** A Navy recruitment officer is murdered at a high school and the agents receive help from Ducky's predecessor in their search for the killer. (R)
9.50 **5 News Weekend.**
10.00 **Big Brother.** Highlights of another 24 hours in the Big Brother house, including coverage of the latest eviction as seen from the point of view of the contestants.
11.00 **Big Brother's Bit on the Psych.** Psychological analysis of the housemates' behaviour.
12.00 **SuperCasino.** **4.00** **Wildlife SOS.** (R) **4.25** Make It Big. (R) **4.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.00** Angels of Jam. (R) **5.10** Hana's Helpline. (R) **5.20** Angels of Jam. (R) **5.25** The Funky Valley Show. (R) **5.40** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.50** Hana's Helpline. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 The Premier League's Most Amazing Moments **9.00** The Urban Prom 2013 **10.30** Russell Howard's Good News **11.00** Family Guy
BBC Four
7.00 Nature's Microworlds **7.30** Eisteddfod 2013 with Sian Williams **8.00** Inside the Perfect Predator **9.00** Sebastian Bergman **10.30** Top of the Pops 1977: Big Hits **11.30** Blondie: One Way or Another
3.05 **Film:** A Cinderella Story (2004) **4.55** **Film:** Step Up (2006) **7.00** You've Been Framed! **9.00** **Film:** The Bourne Identity (2002) **11.20** **Film:** Hannibal (2001)
ITV3
3.00 **Film:** Pride and Prejudice (2005) **5.35** Agatha Christie's Poirot **6.45** Foyles War **9.00** Lewis **11.00** Wire in the Blood
ITV4
3.40 British Touring Car Championship **5.15** Live Pre-Season Football: Tottenham Hotspur v Espanyol (Kick-off 5.30pm). Coverage of the fixture at White Hart Lane, where Spurs play their final match before the start of the Premier League season. **7.50** World of Sport: Petrol Heads **8.05** Black Gold **9.00** Hell on Wheels **10.00** **Film:** Natural Born Killers (1994)
E4
5.30 The Mindy Project **6.00** The Big Bang Theory **7.00** Suburgatory (1995) **5.15** Arriety (2010) **7.10** Happy Endings **9.00** **Film:** He's Just Not That Into You (2009) **11.30** PhoneShop
Film4
2.55 Ever After: A Cinderella Story (1995) **5.15** Arriety (2010) **7.10** (500) Days of Summer (2009) **9.00** Road to Perdition (2002) **11.15** Sorority Row (2009)

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Take in a top West End show and have some free time in London for shopping and sightseeing. For the Dine and Dance option see the matinee performance before heading back to the hotel for dinner and a disco (conditions apply). For the Saturday Night option you will see the evening performance.

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*The "from" price and price bands vary for each show – see brochure for details.

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Please read brochure/web page for full information plus terms and conditions

What's On!

Listings supplied by Press Association

SUNDAY'S TV 11.08.13

CHOICE



Faye Marsay

The White Queen
BBC1, 9pm

It's a testament to this period drama that we're still gripped, even though you don't need to be an amateur historian to know what's going to happen to some of characters. So, we can all nod knowingly this week, as the new king is feeling a bit jumpy about his enemies. His way of dealing with the threat is to honour those he knows are loyal to him, but his wife has a different approach as she talks to Brackenbury in secret. Meanwhile, Elizabeth is so desperate for allies, she even accepts an offer of help from Margaret Beaufort, despite her daughter's warnings.

BBC1

6.00 Athletics: World Championships. **10.00** Sunday Morning Live. **11.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.00** BBC News; Weather. **12.10** The One Show: Best of Britain. (R) **12.40** Countryfile. (R) **1.35** Bargain Hunt. **2.05** Escape to the Country. (R) **2.55** Songs of Praise. **3.30** Athletics: World Championships. **7.05** BBC News; Regional News; Weather. **7.30** Celebrity Mastermind. Famous faces take to the black chair in the specialist and general knowledge quiz. (R) **8.00** Countryfile. John Craven is in Northumberland, where he goes in search of the elusive white-beaked dolphin and visits a Bronze Age burial site. Tom Heap investigates GM technology. **9.00** The White Queen. Anne worries that Elizabeth is still a threat and plots to kill the princes in the tower, so the former queen is forced to accept Margaret Beaufort's offer of help. **10.00** BBC News; Regional News; Weather. **10.25** Room 101 - Extra Storage. Frank Skinner chats to Greg Davies, Ben Fogle and Janet Street-Porter about their pet hates, which include people who use suitcases on wheels, multichannel TV and friends' hobbies. (R) **11.05** That Puppet Game Show. Family entertainment show. (R) **11.45** Film: Win a Date with Tad Hamilton! (2004) Romantic comedy, starring Kate Bosworth, Topher Grace and Josh Duhamel. **1.15** Weatherview. **1.20** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 This Is BBC Two. **6.15** Film: Angel on My Shoulder. (1946) **8.00** Around the World in 80 Days. (R) **9.00** Gardeners' World. (R) **9.30** The Beechgrove Garden. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.30** Raymond Blanc: How to Cook Well. (R) **12.00** Coast. **12.10** EastEnders. **2.05** Film: Hans Christian Andersen. (1952) **3.55** The Making of King Arthur. **4.55** Film: First Knight. (1995) **7.00** The Battle for Malta. Historian James Holland analyses the Second World War battle for the strategically important Mediterranean island, which was under siege by Axis forces for more than two years. (R) **8.00** Dragons' Den. New series. Interior designer Kelly Hoppen and cloud-computing pioneer Piers Linney join Peter Jones, Deborah Meaden and Duncan Bannatyne to evaluate a series of business pitches. **9.00** The Haiky Bikers' Restoration Road Trip. New series. Si King and Dave Myers meet enthusiasts restoring machinery from the Industrial Revolution, beginning with a visit to Pleasley Colliery in Derbyshire. **10.00** Blackadder the Third. Edmund gets caught up in the French Revolution. (R) **10.30** Numb: Simon Amstell Live at the BBC. The comedian performs his stand-up show at the Television Centre. **11.30** Film: The Visitor. (2007) Drama, with Danai Gurira. **1.10** Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) **2.05** Holby City. (R) **3.05** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Jake and the Neverland Pirates. **6.15** Jake and the Neverland Pirates. **6.25** Poppy Cat. (R) **6.40** Poppy Cat. (R) **6.50** Canimals. (R) **7.00** Canimals. (R) **7.10** Bookaboo. (R) **7.20** Kick Buttocks. Suburban Daredevil. **7.35** The Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes! **8.00** Sonny with a Chance. **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Country House Sunday. **9.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. **10.20** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **11.20** ITV News: Weather. (R) **12.30** Love Your Garden. (R) **1.30** The Community Shield Live. **4.15** Film: The Mummy. (1999) **6.30** Regional Programme; Weather. **6.45** ITV News: Weather. **7.00** Tipping Point: Lucky Stars. Coronation Street star Sue Cleaver (Eileen Grimshaw). This Morning's Matt Johnson and Olympic rowing gold medalist Anna Watkins take part in the quiz show. Ben Shephard hosts. **8.00** All Star Mr & Mrs. With Coronation Street's Jane Danson and former co-star Robert Beck, 1980s Doctor Who Colin Baker and his wife, and presenter Michaela Strachan with her partner. Last in the series. **9.00** Law & Order: UK. An elderly woman is found dead in her flat. **10.10** ITV News: Weather. **10.15** The Community Shield Highlights. Manchester United v Wigan Athletic. **11.15** Perspectives: Hugh Laurie - Down by the River. (R) **12.15** The Store. **2.15** Monk. (R) **3.45** Motorsport UK. **4.35** ITV News: Weather. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.10 The Hoobs. (R) **6.35** Ironman 2013. **7.00** London Triathlon. **7.55** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.25** Frasier. (R) **8.55** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **1.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **1.25** The Simpsons. (R) **2.00** Deal or No Deal. **3.00** Film: Bride Wars. (2009) Comedy, starring Kate Hudson and Anne Hathaway. **4.45** Film: Leap Year. (2010) Premiere. Romantic comedy, starring Amy Adams and Matthew Goode. **6.40** Channel 4 News. **7.00** Kirstie's Fill Your House for Free. Kirstie Allsopp and the team fill a family home with some sturdy and stylish pieces, and transform a couple's bedroom, complete with a bespoke dressing table - all for free. (R) **8.00** The Mill. Robert arranges to relocate Susannah after finding out who the father of her child is, while Lucy discovers her sister never returned to the workhouse. **9.00** Southcliffe. Claire struggles to accept her daughter's death. Paul tries to compensate for the bad husband and father he has been, and David's secret about Morton begins to take hold of him. **10.00** Film: The Number 23. (2007) Thriller. A man develops a deadly fixation with the number 23 after reading a novel with startling similarities to his own life. Thriller, starring Jim Carrey and Virginia Madsen. **12.00** Film: Vanilla Sky. (2001) **2.15** Phil Spencer. Secret Agent. (R) **3.10** Secret Eaters. (R) **4.05** Deal or No Deal: Deafest. (R) **5.00** Countdown. (R) **5.45** Baking Mad with Eric Lanlard. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **6.15** Fifi and the Flowerfats. (R) **6.25** Bubble Guppies. (R) **6.35** The Mr Men Show. (R) **6.50** Chloë's Closet. **7.00** Roobarb and Gustard Too. (R) **7.10** Bananas in Pajamas. (R) **7.20** Castle Farm. (R) **7.25** Noddy in Toyland. (R) **7.40** City of Friends. (R) **7.50** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **7.55** Little Princess. (R) **8.10** The Adventures of Bottle Top Bill and His Best Friend Corky. (R) **8.25** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **8.40** Mio Mao. (R) **9.45** Rupert Bear. (R) **9.00** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.15** Toby's Travelling Circus. **9.25** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **9.40** Jelly Jam. **10.00** Bert and Ernie's Great Adventures. (R) **10.10** Power Rangers Samurai. (R) **10.40** Sluggers. **11.05** Highland Emergency. (R) **11.35** Big Brother. (R) **12.30** BB BOTS: Rylan's Supersized Celebrity Sunday. **1.30** The Hotel Inspector. Return. (R) **2.30** Film: An American Tail: Fievel Goes West. (1991) **4.00** Film: Tinker Bell. (2008) **5.30** Film: Open Season 2. (2008) **6.55** 5 News Weekend. **7.00** Cricket: The Ashes. England v Australia. **8.00** Once Upon a Time. Neal's fiancée Tamarra reveals her true colours. **9.00** Big Brother. Daily round-up of highlights. **10.00** Film: Shoot 'Em Up. (2007) Action adventure, starring Clive Owen. **11.45** Film: The Detonator. (2006) **1.25** SuperCasino. **4.00** Wildlife SOS. (R) **4.25** Make It Big. (R) **4.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.00** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.05** Hana's Helpline. (R) **5.20** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.25** The Funky Family Show. (R) **5.40** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.50** Hana's Helpline. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Shoplife **8.00** Great Movie Mistakes 2: The Sequel **8.15** Film: Shanghai Noon (2000) **10.00** Family Guy **10.45** Badtuts **11.15** American Dad!
BBC Four
7.00 The Wonder of Weeds **8.00** Edinburgh Festival: A Review Show Special **9.00** Seven Ages of Starlight **10.30** Natural World: Polar Bears and Grizzlies - Bears on Top of the World **11.20** Alan Whicker's Journey of a Lifetime
ITV2
3.10 Film: What a Girl Wants (2003) **5.10** Film: Step Up 2: The Streets (2008) **7.15** Film: Johnny English (2003) **9.00** Film: Troy (2004) Epic adventure, starring Brad Pitt.
ITV3
2.55 Lewis **6.55** Agatha Christie's Poirot **9.00** Film: Something's Gotta Give (2003) **11.40** A Touch of Frost
ITV4
3.55 Film: Flash Gordon (1980) **6.10** Film: Police Academy 4: Citizens on Patrol (1987) **8.00** Premiership Rugby Union Sevens **9.00** Fraud Squad **10.00** Film: Raging Bull (1980)
E4
3.30 How I Met Your Mother **5.30** The Mindy Project **6.00** The Big Bang Theory **7.30** New Girl **8.00** Film: 27 Dresses (2008). Romantic comedy, starring Katherine Heigl and James Marsden. **10.10** The Inbetweeners **10.40** Skins: Rise - Part Two **11.40** Don't Trust the B... in Apartment 23
Film4
3.10 The Towering Inferno (1974) **6.20** Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps (2010) **9.00** Die Hard 4.0 (2007) **11.30** House of Flying Daggers (2004)

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David Moyes' Manchester United will face Sevilla at Old Trafford on Friday, 9 August in Rio Ferdinand's testimonial match. The 34-year-old will start his 12th season at the club with a showpiece match against the La Liga side ahead of the Reds' Community Shield clash with Wigan Athletic.

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What's On!

Film Choices

MONDAY

A Time to Remember, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A middle-aged single mother returns under a cloud to the family home for Thanksgiving, where she tries to heal the fractured relationship between herself and her estranged mother. However, any possible reconciliation is threatened by an unexpected and dramatic development. Drama, starring Dana Delany, Doris Roberts, Megan Gallagher and Louise Fletcher. (2003)

TUESDAY

Murder Among Friends, Channel 5, 3.10pm

A would-be actress resolves to prove her friend is innocent of murdering his own father for an inheritance. She enlists the aid of a washed-up private eye whose career has been destroyed by a lawsuit. Detective thriller, starring Greg Evigan. (2001)

WEDNESDAY

Class, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A wealthy law student has to complete a public service course to finish his degree, so he reluctantly accepts the task of representing a working-class single mother who is struggling to support her sick child. At first the lawyer and client distrust each other, but a close connection ultimately develops. Romantic drama, starring Jodi Lyn O'Keefe and Eric Roberts. (2010)

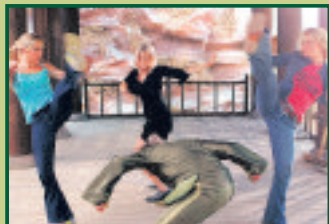
A Lot Like Love, BBC1, 11.35pm

Two bored travellers instantly bond, but their fledgling relationship suffers too many setbacks. They agree to split up, but their plans to separate are foiled by a series of unexpected reunions as fate repeatedly throws them back together. Romantic comedy, starring Ashton Kutcher, Amanda Peet and Aimee Garcia. (2005)

THURSDAY

Proof, BBC1, 11.35pm

A woman mourns the death of her father, a brilliant professor whose genius deteriorated as he succumbed to dementia. Afraid of sharing his fate, she shies away from human contact – until one of his former students uncovers an unknown mathematical theorem that will have ramifications for both their futures. Drama, with Gwyneth Paltrow and Anthony Hopkins. (2005)



DOA: Dead or Alive, Friday, ITV, 10.35pm

FRIDAY

DOA: Dead or Alive, ITV, 10.35pm

Three female martial arts experts – a jewel thief, a wrestler and a ninja princess – are invited to compete in a secret fighting tournament. But when the rivals realise the mastermind behind the tournament has sinister plans for them, they have to work together to survive. Action adventure, based on the videogame series of the same name, with Jaime Pressly, Devon Aoki and Holly Valance. (2006)

Pick of the Week

David hopes his new role is a class apart

When he's not swimming for charity, scooping out variety acts on Britain's Got Talent, or writing children's books, David Williams is a brilliant comedy actor.

Despite the fact he's not done anything comedic on our screens for a while, his CV is crammed with classic moments, characters and catchphrases.

And Williams makes a welcome return to our screens tonight, albeit without Little Britain sidekick Matt Lucas, disappointingly, in this new six-part sitcom.

Despite many of us stating our happiest and most amusing days were those we spent at school, the classroom has been a relatively untapped resource of material for comedy writers until recent years.

However, following the runaway success of The Inbetweeners and the promise of the Jack Whitehall vehicle Bad Education in recent years, the Beeb have commissioned another classroom comedy.

Just like the latter, Big School is set in and around a dysfunctional staff room, and also like Bad Education,

there is a story of unrequited love between two of the teachers at the centre.

Williams explains: "I wanted to do something a bit like Remains Of The Day – the story of these two servants who were in love with each other but they can't quite express it."

"I was thinking what could be the modern take on that? I thought well a school's quite a good environment because you don't get any privacy at school."

"There's always corridors teaming with kids, staff rooms, dining rooms, whatever. So I thought that could be a rather good setting and I thought it's a universal experience that 99 per cent of us went to school, or have got kids at school."

Williams plays 40-something Deputy Head of Chemistry Mr Church, who is about to resign from Greybridge following a particularly dramatic experiment with liquid nitrogen and 1000 ping pong balls. But the arrival of new French teacher Miss Postern changes his mind.

"They're quite suited to each other in some ways that you think who

else is going to have you," says Catherine Tate, who plays Miss Postern.

"The seed is planted at the beginning for Mr Church. He's quite taken with her and of course she's quite flattered that someone could go to such lengths."

"It's nice that throughout the series he makes quite grand gestures that of course all completely flat on their face. But everyone likes a grand gesture."

Although some of the characters may appear clichéd, the top-notch cast makes the staff of Big School a bit more believable and funny than the aforementioned Bad Education.

One of these is lothario PE teacher Mr Gurn (Philip Glenister) who makes no secret of wanting to "plough" the new member of staff, prompting Mr Church to take advice from a pupil on how to succeed with women in tonight's opening episode.

However, Mr Church's phone doesn't send picture messages, so he can't follow Manyou's first suggestion, so that just leaves the option of offering Miss Postern a lift home.



David Williams stars in Big School, Friday, BBC1, 9pm

Best of the Rest

MONDAY

My Cyberstalking Hell: Liz McClarnon Channel 5, 10pm

Liz McClarnon rose to fame in girl group Atomic Kitten, and she's enjoying the limelight a second time round since reuniting with her fellow bandmates for The Big Reunion. Of course we've seen her ever-smiley face pop up in TV presenting slots over the years as well, but this one-off programme tells of how often Liz's smile may have been painted on – because behind it all, she was suffering at the hands of a stalker. So after feeling so threatened for her safety, she's on a mission to raise awareness of how serious stalking can be. She trawls through some of the messages she received which ranged from cheeky, to threatening sexual assault, before she meets other people who have had similar experiences.

TUESDAY

On the Run ITV, 9pm

The next hour of viewing isn't going to be the most light-hearted you've ever seen, but it's certainly interesting, and nothing like anything else on the box at the moment. The one-off documentary follows a manhunt trying to track down three wanted criminals – yep, they're on the run – so they can be brought to justice. Presented by Mark Williams-Thomas and Natasha Kaplinsky, we get a rare insight into how their undercover team trace and with the help of the police, apprehend those on the run from the law. Of these three wanted men, one is a sex offender, one a violent fugitive and the other a burglar and car thief, but surely they won't be running for long...

You're Killing My Son: The Mum Who Went on the Run Channel 4, 9pm

In 2012, seven-year-old Neon Roberts was diagnosed with a brain tumour leading to doctors prescribing potentially life-saving radiotherapy treatment. Before they could go through with it, however, his mum, Sally, disappeared along with the boy – she felt that an alternative therapy was the best option and was willing to go to extreme lengths to do what she felt was in Neon's best interests. This documentary, shown as part of the Cutting Edge strand, tells the remarkable story of a family at odds with one another and the medical profession; of the courts that ruled against Sally and in favour of the treatment, and of the brave lad himself, who has had to endure no end of suffering due to his condition.

WEDNESDAY

Live International Football ITV, 7.30pm

England and Scotland face each other in this friendly match at Wembley Stadium, as they look horns for the first time since 1999, when they met at the old Wembley Stadium in the second leg of a Euro 2000 qualifying play-off. Although Scotland won 1-0 on that occasion it did not prove to be enough to prevent England claiming a place at the tournament, as Kevin Keegan's men had triumphed 2-0 in the first leg of the play-off

four days earlier at Hampden Park. The hosts will enter this contest as favourites, but the Scots will be determined to impress once again after claiming a surprise 1-0 victory away to Croatia in a World Cup qualifier last time out.

I'm Spazticus

Channel 4, 10.50pm

Given how caught up with political correctness we are as a nation, there's every chance you've clocked the title of this hidden camera show and recoiled in horror. And that's fine – so long as you give the programme ten minutes of your time to prove you're right. Because, actually, this is an amusing take on a prank show that pokes fun at that idea of the politically correct.

With so much hype surrounding the first series when it aired last year, those ratings can't be wrong. For the uninitiated, cameras follow the pranksters as they wind up members of the public in a unique and hilarious way. First up, unsuspecting celebrities are fooled into endorsing a bizarre new charity for amputees.

THURSDAY

My Dwarf Family ITV, 9pm

Roughly one in 25,000 children are born with achondroplasia, the most common form of dwarfism every year, and this programme delves into how it affects family life. Following three families who each have to deal with the effects of achondroplasia, it gives us an honest glimpse into life with the limiting condition. Gillian is a small mother who is keen to protect her small 13-year-old daughter from the issues she faced as a teenager. Meanwhile, Rebecca is hoping her dwarfism won't in any way jeopardise her chances of starting a family with Ben, an average height man. And Phil has a tough love approach to preparing his small son Paddy for secondary school.

FRIDAY

The Burrowers BBC2, 9pm

You can always rely on Chris Packham to shine a spotlight on the nation's underappreciated wildlife. With this new three-part documentary series, he's going underground to investigate the lives of some of our subterranean mammals, including water voles, rabbits, badgers and moles. It's no mean feat, as the nature of their burrows, warrens, setts and dens means they're not exactly easy environments in which to film – so to combat the problem, Chris and the BBC's nature team use full-scale replicas of their habitats. Worthy of particular note is the world's largest man-made rabbit warren – it was made by pouring concrete into an abandoned warren, before returning months later to excavate it.

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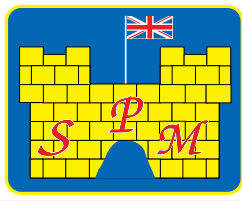
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Semi Detached Property, Lounge, Kitchen, Utility, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Unfurnished, Gas Central Heating, Front & Rear Gardens, Off Road Parking

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TANSEY GREEN ROAD
£530 pcm
End Terrace Property, Lounge, Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom with shower, Garage at rear, Front & Rear Gardens, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing

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COMMONSIDES
£550 pcm
Mid Terrace House, Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, Bathroom with Shower, Three Bedrooms, Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Rear Gardens, NO PETS

ROWLEY REGIS



EDEN GARDENS
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First Floor Flat, Entrance, Lounge, Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom with shower, Electric Heating, Double Glazing, Parking, Communal Garden

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PARK ROAD
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COLLEY GATE



WINDMILL HILL
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HEYDON ROAD
£595 pcm
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PENSNETT



HIGH STREET
£475 pcm
End Terrace Property, Three Reception Rooms, Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Unfurnished, Off Road Parking, Rear Garden

TIPTON



TIPPS STONE CLOSE
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KINGSWINFORD



LABURNUM ROAD
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BRIERLEY HILL



DADFORD VIEW
£450 pcm
Cluster Style Property, Lounge, Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom, Off Road Parking, Double Glazing, Gas Central Heating

WORDSLEY



HIGH STREET
£515 pcm
Semi Detached Property, Lounge, Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, Unfurnished, Rear Garden

PENSNETT



BRYCE ROAD
£525 pcm
Semi Detached Property, Lounge, Kitchen/Diner, Two Bedrooms, Bathroom, Unfurnished, Gas Central Heating, Off Road Parking, Front & Rear Gardens

DUDLEY



STOURBRIDGE ROAD
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SEDGLEY



KINGS ROAD
£550 pcm
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GORNAL



BARR STREET
£510 pcm
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Property

Idyllic countryside views from lodges



Four timber lodges at the Catsley Farm Chalet site are priced at £149,000, ideal for 12-month occupancy holiday lets

AN EXCLUSIVE new development of just four timber holiday lodges in a beautiful location with breathtaking views are going on the market priced at £149,000.

First on the market is Plot 1, Kinlet View, Catsley Farm Chalet Site, Bewdley, measuring 40ft by 20ft and with a 19ft lounge, open plan kitchen/dining room with comprehensive range of appliances, three bedrooms and bathroom.

With 12 month holiday occupancy permitted, the site is reserved for over 40s with site fees of £1,800 a year to cover ground rent, maintenance of communal areas and shared water and septic tank arrangements.

Purchasers of plots two, three and four will have the

option to discuss the final specification with the site owner as the Tingdene lodges can normally be completed to order with certain optional extras.

Plot 1 is already sited with to the front a full width decked balcony and the lounge opening out to the balcony, while in the kitchen integral appliances include Baumatic fridge/freezer, dishwasher, electric oven, canopy hood, ceramic hob and washing machine.

The bathroom has a white suite of bath with mixer shower over and screen, vanity unit with wash hand basin and WC.

Call Allan Morris & Jones on 01299 400555 for further details.

Offers of £425,000 are sought for 5-bed house

A DELIGHTFUL five-bedroom property in Pedmore with self-contained accommodation that could create a ground floor bedroom with en suite and second kitchen/laundry is on the market with a price guide of £425,000.

The house - Ham Leigh in Old Ham Lane - is ideally situated for Stourbridge Junction railway station and amenities within Oldswinford and Stourbridge town centre, as well as for commuting by road, and near to local schools. The property has a large block paved driveway with a detached double garage, with the landscaped garden having a paved patio and lawn with dwarf wall.

Surround

On the ground floor is an impressive reception hall with fitted guest cloakroom, as well as a dining room with access to a home office and a rear lounge with feature fire surround and patio doors to the rear garden.

The kitchen/breakfast room has a range of base and wall units with integrated oven and five burner hob, and a defined family area.

There is also a second kitchen with



The house called Ham Leigh in Old Ham Lane is ideally situated for the station access to the front and rear of the property, ground floor bedroom with en suite, bathroom with corner bath and separate rain head shower.

On the first floor are four bedrooms and a white en suite, plus large house viewing.

Open day for prospective buyers of spacious semi in Rowley Regis

AN OPEN day is being held on Saturday August 17 at a spacious three bedroom semi-detached house in Highfield Road, Rowley Regis.

It is on the market for offers of £175,000 with no upward chain.

Renovated and extended by the present occupiers, the property also has a bathroom, two reception rooms, large kitchen/diner, utility area, ground floor WC, off road parking, garden with lawn and patio area, gas central heating and double glazing. On the ground floor the lounge, 12ft 4in by 15ft 4in, has a gas fire in feature surround while the dining room/reception room two measuring 15ft 1in by 9ft 4in has an archway to a kitchen diner - 27ft 4in by 8ft 6in - with a range of wall and base units, work surfaces, one and a

half bowl stainless steel sink drainer, space for appliances with cooker hood over, built-in dishwasher, space for dining table and archway to a utility area with cupboards, work surfaces, plumbing for washing machine, space for appliances and door to WC with toilet and wash hand basin.

Patio

On the first floor are three bedrooms and a newly fitted bathroom with bath with shower over, WC and vanity wash hand basin.

Outside the rear garden has a patio area with steps up to a lawn and gate through to rear parking.

Call the agent the intelligent move on 0121 500 6012 for further details or to arrange a viewing.



The extended Highfield Road property

Motoring

Compiled by Motoring
Editor Sharon Walters

Chevrolet's getting on right Trax

By David Banner

IT WAS way back in the mid-1930s that Chevrolet introduced the motoring world to its very first sports utility vehicle – the Carryall Suburban. And now 78 years later, the company is aiming to make a similar impact on the compact SUV market with the dynamic looking Trax.

Entering such a fiercely competitive segment and taking on the likes of the established Nissan Qashqai and Juke is a brave move and suggests Chevrolet has every confidence in the Trax.

And why not indeed? Because this beautifully crafted model with its bold, ready-for-action stance is packed with technical wizardry, offers excellent economy and boasts driving dynamics to match.

Elegant
In fact, the Trax could be the perfect model for anyone who wants all the benefits of a full-blooded SUV combined with the handling and economy of a smaller car.

The vehicle is an instant attention-grabber thanks to its elegant styling. It features muscular rear haunches, pronounced wheel arches, a rear spoiler, sweeping light clusters and a double grille with Chevrolet's iconic bowtie emblem sitting proudly in the middle.

Buyers can select from two trim levels – LS and LT – and both come with a whole host of techno treats as standard, which is a real bonus as many manufacturers rake up the asking price of vehicles with a selection of optional extras.

But that's not the case with the Trax which starts from



Look at me – the new Chevrolet Trax is an instant attention-grabber thanks to its elegant styling

just £15,495 and rises to £20,495. There is a choice of engines – a 1.4-litre turbo and 1.6-litre petrol versions, and a 1.7-litre turbo diesel version.

An automatic transmission is available on the diesel Trax and all manual models are fitted with a start/stop function to maximise fuel efficiency.

In addition, many models are equipped with Chevrolet's highly efficient intelligent all-wheel-drive system which

means never being caught out by one of Mother Nature's bad mood swings. The interior is light and spacious with all dials and controls perfectly positioned for driver usability. It has an ultra-modern and chic feel to it and Chevrolet has introduced a state-of-the-art system called MyLink which means occupants can stay connected to their media devices on the go.

There is a very competitively-priced app that can be

downloaded called BRINGGO which does exactly that and brings sat nav capabilities to the Trax. Such innovative technology is exactly what buyers demand these days and Chevrolet appears to have delivered on all counts with MyLink. So the Trax looks full of charm and charisma, has sufficient on-board technology to keep the geekish of techies amused for hours and has room to accommodate five adults with plenty of scope for luggage.

In fact, the boot offers 1,370 litres of storage space with the rear seats folded flat.

But how does the Trax perform when confronted with sharp mountain inclines, fast motorways and even off-road challenges? The answer is... admirably.

We put a couple of models that Chevrolet believes will be the biggest sellers through their paces and they didn't disappoint. First up was the 1.4-litre petrol turbo model in range-topping LT trim with six-speed manual gearbox priced at £19,795.

This car can reach 62mph from a standing start in 9.8 seconds and tops out at 121mph.

It can deliver 44.1mpg on a combined run and has carbon emissions of 149g/km.

With ample power on tap, the Trax easily dealt with winding roads and acceleration was smooth and rapid through the gears.

There was very little roll and minimal road surface and engine noise. Comfort levels were excellent and any obstacles put in its path were overcome with ease.

We even took the vehicle off-road and it coped effortlessly with a gravelled course that included a number of tricky climbs.

Next up was the more frugal 1.7-litre turbo diesel model with its combined fuel efficiency of 57.6mpg and emissions of 129g/km. This car, again in LT trim and priced at £20,495, can sprint from 0-62mph in 9.4 seconds and has a top speed of 114mph.

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*Model shown is a Trax 1.6 LT priced at £17,495 OTR. Vehicle shown features metallic paint at an extra cost of £445. Price correct at time of print.

Official Government Environment Data. Fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO₂ emissions (g/km). Chevrolet Trax Range: Urban 34.4 (8.2) – 52.3 (5.4), Extra Urban 50.4 (5.6) – 70.6 (4.0), Combined 43.4 (6.5) – 62.7 (4.5) CO₂ emissions 153 – 120g/km. Official EU-regulated test data are provided for comparison purposes and actual performance will depend on driving style, road conditions and other non-technical factors.



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Motoring



Japanese marque Honda occupies top spot for used-car reliability. Pictured: The Honda HR-V

Honda is number one in used-car reliability table

HONDA is the most reliable used car manufacturer in the UK for the eighth consecutive year, according to research by What Car? and Warranty Direct.

The Japanese brand topped the survey of 38 manufacturers and 50,000 live Warranty Direct policies on three to eight-year old vehicles.

Once again, Asian manufacturers dominated the study of the most reliable brands, with Suzuki and Hyundai second and third behind Honda. Only Chevrolet and Ford break the Far Eastern stranglehold of the top 10.

At the other end of the scale, luxury and prestige marques Bentley, Land Rover and Porsche are the most likely to break down – 86 per cent of Bentleys

suffer a problem each year, making it Britain's least dependable car maker.

What Car? editor-in-chief Chas Hallett said: "Honda's success in the reliability stakes is down to low failure rates, and when cars do go wrong they're easy and cheap to fix."

"Reliability is one of the key attributes that buyers look for when looking to make a used purchase, so manufacturers that can demonstrate that quality will always fare well."

"The manufacturers at the bottom end of the table could learn a thing or two from their Japanese counterparts."

Warranty Direct managing director Duncan McClure Fisher said: "Household budgets are already strained, so the last thing you want is a vehicle that costs you yet more unwanted bills."

"That is why it pays to research cars before you buy – make the wrong choice and you could land yourself with a car that causes you nothing but hassle and money."

Overall, the most reliable models are the Mitsubishi Lancer and Vauxhall Agila, both of which also star as the cheapest to repair. The least reliable model is the Audi RS6 but the iconic Porsche 911 is the most expensive to fix, with an eye-watering average repair bill of £1157.04.

Electrical faults are the most common across all cars, with almost a quarter (23.5 per cent) needing a visit to the garage in an average year. Axle and suspension faults are also common, affecting 22 per cent of cars.

For full details see the latest issue of What Car?

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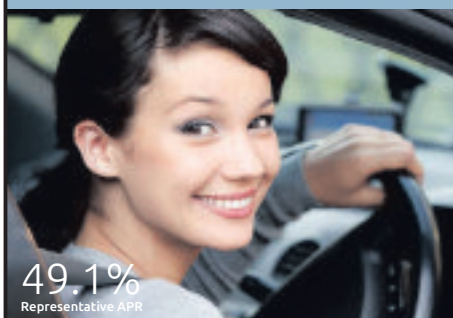
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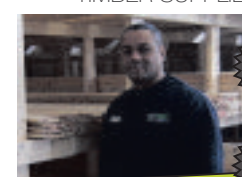
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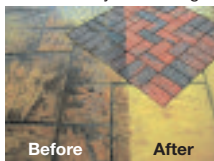
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Under 7's.
Looking for 1 player to finish squad.
Contact Martin Ball on 07824 530970.
Under 15's.
Goal keeper required plus all field players.
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Four on the bounce as 20/20 loss is forgotten

Wombourne 1st XI 238-5
WBD Dartmouth 241-2
WBD won by eight wickets
DARTMOUTH put aside their 20/20 finals day defeat to record a fourth successive win in the Premier Division of the Birmingham League.

Dartmouth's catching was poor with five chances put down during Wombourne's innings.

That, plus an excellent 68 not out from Ed Denham gave Wombourne a fighting total of 238.

Kadeer Ali and Basit Zaman gave Dartmouth a good start with a stand of 78 before Zaman fell for 40.

Ali (101) and Rawlston Tappin (52no) added 111 for the second wicket before Zeeshan Asif saw Dartmouth home with a boundary laden 41 not out.

WBD 2nd XI 249-5
Wombourne 174-6
Match Drawn

A maiden league century from Latif Ahmed (100no) was the highlight of Dartmouth's imposing total. He was well-supported by the in-form Amit John (49). Dartmouth were unable to force the win thanks to Neil Grant. The Wombourne opener's 91 helped his side close on 174-6.

WBD 3rd XI 189-7
Armitage 171-6
Match Drawn

Adil Jiva top-scored for Dartmouth with 58. Armitage raced to 171-6 in 22 overs before rain ended proceedings.

Springhill 174
WBD 4th XI 107
Springhill won by 67 runs.
Dartmouth were well beaten by leaders Springhill. Shoab Farooque took three wickets but in reply Dartmouth never threatened.

On Saturday Dartmouth look to make it five Premier Division wins in a row when they visit Himley.

Ticket sales for Saddlers

TICKETS are on sale to Walsall supporters for next month's derby clash with Wolves at Molineux.

The Saddlers have been given an allocation of 2,375 tickets.

They are on sale to season ticket holders and will then be available to supporters with a booking history from August 26.

They are priced at £22 for adults, £13 for pensioners and under-21s, £10 for under-17s and £8 for under-12s.

Odemwingie foreign switch ruled out



Peter Odemwingie

ALBION striker Peter Odemwingie has ruled out a move abroad and is ready to stay at The Hawthorns if he cannot seal a Premier League move.

Albion have rejected three bids from the Premier League and the Nigeria international will resist any transfer out of the top flight despite continued interest from Dubai-based club Al Nasr.

He is ready to leave the Baggies but the Hawthorns hierarchy have turned down three bids of around £1.5m plus add-ons from English top-flight clubs including West

Albion

Ham and Fulham. Al Nasr have revived their interest in the 32-year-old and held fresh talks with the Baggies in recent days, although reports of an increased bid of £1.5m from the Middle East outfit are premature.

They previously had an £850,000 offer rejected out of hand.

However, Odemwingie will fight any attempt by the Baggies to offload him to a foreign club or a Championship side and is intent on staying in the English top flight.

That leaves Baggies bosses with four weeks to agree a deal with a Premier League club before the transfer window closes or be left with the prospect of the forward - who has been frozen out of the first team picture since the start of pre-season - remaining on their wage bill.

Odemwingie has been in open dispute with the Baggies since submitting a transfer request in January.

Albion have taken a strong squad to Cork on a pre-season tour, with defenders Jonas Olsson and

Gabriel Tamas the only notable absentees in the party that flew from Birmingham on Tuesday.

New signing Diego Lugano was among the travelling party, while winger Kemar Roofe is the only youngster in the squad.

Meanwhile, Albion remain in discussions over deal to bring Manchester City winger Scott Sinclair to The Hawthorns on loan.

The Baggies are optimistic a deal can be done before the start of the Premier League season but they believe negotiations still have some way to run.

Heathens progress to Knockout despite loss

DUDLEY ensured Knockout Cup progress at the weekend - and then claimed a stunning National League away win.

They lost 47-43 at Buxton in the cup, but their 16-point lead from the home leg was more than enough to put them in the semi-finals.

Then, despite injuries to Ashley Morris (thumb) and Gareth Isherwood (shoulder) they won 50-38 at Stoke on Sunday with Lewis Blackbird and Paul Starke outstanding.

At Buxton, Heathens let a narrow lead slip in the closing stages against a resilient home side, but team boss Will Pottinger said: "We're still through on aggregate."

"It was a superb win at Stoke considering Ash and Gareth only scored one point apiece," Greaves' late flourish - twice beating Stoke's Kyle Hughes - proved crucial.

Maximum

Both Lewis Blackbird and Paul Starke scored maximums to lead Heathens to all four points in their first away meeting of the National League campaign.

Pottinger said: "When Ash pulled out whilst we were three points down I would have taken a point in all honesty, so to come away with all four is a tremendous effort by everybody."

"Lewis and Paul led the team superbly, both going unbeaten, and young Nathan did a great job in his last few rides as well."

"To still get four points with effectively only five riders really is a great achievement, and it bodes

well for the rest of the season when we have a full team."

Youngster Nathan Greaves was arguably the star of the show - recovering from a poor start to spark the Heathens revival in the closing stages.

His reserve partner Lee Geary also notched 5+1 with a determined display, whilst Dan Greenwood upped his game to score seven valuable points.

Carrying a 16-point lead to face Buxton, Heathens put in a battling away performance with Ashley Morris and Lewis Blackbird putting in excellent displays.

But the former-Cradley club let a narrow lead slip in the closing stages against a resilient Hitmen side.

Buxton: Charles Wright 13, Adam McKinnis 10, Liam Cair 9+1, Ryan Blacklock 7+1, Tom Woolley 6+3, Matt Williamson 2+2. Dudley: Lewis Blackbird 13, Ashley Morris 10+1, Paul Starke 8, Gareth Isherwood 6+1, Dan Greenwood 4, Nathan Greaves 2, Lee Geary 0.

Stoke: Luke Priest 10+1, Kyle Hughes 8, Lee Payne 7+2, Lee Smart 6+1, Benji Compton 4+2, Shaun Tedham 3+1. Dudley: Lewis Blackbird 15, Paul Starke 14+1, Nathan Greaves 7+2, Dan Greenwood 7, Lee Geary 5+1, Ashley Morris 1, Gareth Isherwood 1.

Team members run like thunder in 24-hour race

STOURBRIDGE Running Club competed in the Thunder Run 24 race, a tough multi-terrain 24-hour off-road relay against the clock.

The TR24 course is a 10km cross-country circuit set in Staffordshire.

The track twists and turns across varied terrains such as bogs, forests, steep hills and open fields.

SRG had a team of eight-taking part and also two individual runners in Stuart Hannan and Adam Harris.

The race tested the team's tactics, endurance, speed and team work especially as there was heavy rain for several hours which made running conditions very difficult.

Camped

The team camped overnight and took it in turns to run a 10k lap.

A spokesman for the team said it was an exhilarating, rewarding race and they had a brilliant time.

The team managed 25 laps, and finished 58th out of 253 teams from all over the country.

Adam Harris finished in eighth place out of 90 male runners, and he managed 14 laps.

Also at the weekend the



Most of the team from left, Stuart Hannan, Duncan Cornish, Zoe Yeomans, Dave Sheppard, Natalie Dellar, Paul Bradley, Adam Harris, Steve Burch, Andy Bernasconi

club had Joan Clarke running the Dovedale Dipper Marathon challenge.

Organised by the Rotary Club of Matlock, all proceeds went to charity.

The race was held in the Derbyshire Peak District National Park, and although it was a very scenic run most of it was on narrow ledges around hills.

Joan's time was 5.17.

This Saturday the club holds the Stourbridge Stumble a multi-terrain race starting at 6pm from Mary Stevens Park, Stour-

bridge. A 3.5k fun run around the park will also take place - starting at 5pm.

All runners completing the 10k will receive a race memento and there will be medals for all fun run finishers.

For further information and entry forms please go to www.srlclub.co.uk or call 01384 823857 for more details.

Neave the leading club rider of season

STOURBRIDGE Cycling Club's final round of its Time Trial season attracted a season's best 36 riders.

Conditions were good for racing on the evening and guest James Jevons crowned a wonderful series with his fifth win in 23.21 to take the overall championship.

Fastest Stourbridge member was junior Anthony Neave in 25.54 which also made him the championship's leading Stourbridge CC rider.

Importantly, both James and Anthony are young racers with many years of competition ahead of them.

Other Performances by Stourbridge CC members in the final event of the season were: Neil Rushton 26.39; Tony Price 26.39; Roger Allen 26.41; Kieron McMahon 26.42; Jack Cooper 27.39; Anthony Wheatley 28.02; Mat Cheslin 28.11; Ian Cadwallader 28.45; Derek Handley 29.06; Savvy Hasan 30.02; Matt Jones 31.33; Jason Brooks 31.35.

Anthony Neave was the leading Stourbridge CC member in the season-long championship, followed by Kevin Brain and Mark Perry. Hannah Payton competed in the final event for her club team, Kinesis, and clocked an excellent 27.01.

Suarez tip for Albion defender

ALBION new-boy Diego Lugano has told how controversial Liverpool striker Luis Suarez helped convince him to move to The Hawthorns.

The Uruguay captain was set to train with his teammates for the first time this week after completing his free-transfer switch from Paris Saint-Germain.

The 32-year-old defender said conversations with fellow Uruguayans Suarez and Gus Poyet helped him make up his mind.

"I chose Albion because it is a club that is developing a lot," said Lugano. "They had a very good last season and I hope to help the team repeat that or even improve on it."

"I have some very good friends working and playing in this country and I asked them about Albion."

"Suarez told me Liverpool got beaten twice by Albion last season, so that was a very good reference!"



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Hot Heathens

Speedway squad head out to knockout contest

Page 39

Thunder run

Running club in 24-hour grueler

Page 39



League is all ready as votes are cast

THE West Midlands Regional League will kick off as planned on Saturday after issues surrounding its structure were resolved at a special meeting this week, writes **Peter Madeley**.

The premier division will run with an increased quota of 23 teams, meaning every week one side will be without a game.

Premier division outfit Wellington Amateurs, who finished 12th last season, had faced relegation due to fears their ground at School Grove did not meet league regulations.

But the Telford team received a reprieve after division one clubs voted unanimously to allow them to remain in the top flight.

Division one had been left with 14 teams as a result Bilston Town's successful promotion appeal and the demise of AFC Wombourne United.

However, league officials opted to take a vote on the requests of Hereford Lads Club and Bartestree to be promoted from division two.

The two Herefordshire sides finished third and fourth respectively in the third tier last season, but club bosses voted 9 to 6 in favour of granting them promotion.

This gives division one the quota of 16 teams required for a legitimate step seven league.

Division two will kick off with just 14 teams.

As a result of the restructuring, league bosses have prepared revised fixture lists which were due to be issued to clubs today (Thursday).

WMRL chairman Wendy Juggins said: "We are delighted to be up and running and ready for the new season."

Move abroad is ruled out

ALBION striker Peter Odemwingie has ruled out a move abroad and is ready to stay at The Hawthorns if he cannot seal a Premier League move.

Albion have rejected three bids from Premier League clubs and the 32-year-old Nigeria international will resist any transfer out of the top flight despite continued interest from Dubai-based club Al Nasr.

He is ready to leave the Baggies but bosses have turned down three bids of around £1.5m plus add-ons from top-flight clubs including West Ham and Fulham.

Blackbird ruffles a few feathers in win

MAXIMUM man Lewis Blackbird was in a jubilant mood after helping Dudley Heathens to a stunning away win over Stoke on Sunday.

The result, achieved despite the absence of in-form reserve Max Clegg and the withdrawal of both Ashley Morris and Gareth Isherwood, maintained the club's perfect league record from five matches.

Blackbird and Paul Starke were in scorching form at Loomer Road and both Dan Greenwood and Nathan Greaves chipped in with matchwinning contributions.

Blackbird said: "At times it was hard for us with Ash and Gareth getting injured, but

Speedway

all the boys pulled together and dug deep to get a great win at Stoke.

"It was really important to get more points on the board in the National League as we haven't had many fixtures yet, so to win there like we did was brilliant."

"It was a bit disappointing we couldn't win at Buxton earlier in the day, but we made it through and at least we all know the track better ahead of our next visit there in the league."

Meanwhile Cradley legends Alan Grahame and Jan O Pedersen will be hon-

oured for their contribution to the club at a special event later this month. A celebration of the 1983 Cradley double winning side to commemorate the 30th anniversary is taking place at Cradley Heath Liberal Club on Friday, August 23.

Team manager from that season, Peter Adams, is also a special guest with his anecdotes from a lifetime in the sport.

The current Dudley Heathens team will be invited along to the event, which will also feature 80s music and an auction including a signed 1983 replica Cradley race jacket signed by world champions Pedersen, Erik Gundersen, Billy Hamill and Greg Hancock.

A limited edition souvenir brochure will be launched on the night with interviews with all the team, plus previously unseen photographs. Copies will be available for £5 on the night as a launch price with £7 the usual price.

Heathens chairman Nigel Pearson said: "This is shaping up to be a good night and we have had a lot of interest in tickets. I'm sure there will be lots of great stories from Big Al and Jan O."

Tickets are £10 and available from the online shop at dudleyheathens.co or from the track shop next Tuesday at the Stoke match.

Richards off bench for winner

Halesowen Town 1

STOURBRIDGE gained the pre-season bragging rights with a single-goal win over the Yeltz.

Halesowen made all the running in the first half of a feisty friendly.

But efforts by Tom Tonks, Chris Lait, Kristian Green and Ben Haseley failed to produce goals.

Stourbridge's only real chance of the first period fell for Leon Broadhurst to hit high over the bar, but at the start of the second half Jordan Fitzpatrick fired a low drive past the Yeltz post and a left-footer from Ben Billingham fell wide.

Glassboys substitute Will Richards snatched a 70th-minute goal with a well-placed shot.

But the hosts continued to create chances with Haseley's 77th-minute snapshot forcing an initial fine reflex save from Dean Coleman before the keeper turned the rebound away from substitute Nigel Penney.

In the final minute, Yeltz substitute Matt Fulloway's header was cleared off the line.

Rider Racheal in hospital after fall

WOLVERHAMPTON jockey Racheal Kneller is recovering in hospital after fracturing two vertebrae in her back in a fall.

The 25-year-old, from Lower Penn, was injured when the horse she was riding at the Lambourn yard of her boss, trainer Mark Usher, slipped.

"I've fractured two vertebrae and I'll probably be in hospital until the end of the week," said Kneller, who has ridden 36 career winners, eight of them this season.

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JACKETT TO SHUFFLE PACK AFTER INJURIES

IT'S not often the bubble of eve-of-season optimism is pricked on the opening day - especially when it is by an unwelcome spate of injuries.

But that was the case at Deepdale on Saturday as Wolves were left nursing three casualties that look like robbing them of the services of Richard Stearman, George Elokobi and Dave Edwards for the foreseeable future.

That the trio happen to be the most experienced players after captain Sam Ricketts suggests the onus is going to fall on the young guns even more heavily during what is already a demanding early period.

It looks like testing the young squad to the limits, seemingly shattering head coach Kenny Jackett's plan for his new-look team to gel.

Jackett seems unlikely to turn to outcasts Roger Johnson, Jamie O'Hara and Stephen Ward, given he has ignored them all summer, and now banished them to train on their own.

Either way, Wolves will be hoping the return of the injury curse is not a sign of things to come.

Losing three players suggests a bruising encounter - and it was.

The new boss said in the pre-season build-up that League One may surprise fans in that there is more football played than in the division above. But this was more a reminder of the Championship with no quarter given in a highly competitive collision of two of the division's expected promotion contenders.

Veteran Preston striker Kevin Davies has made a career out of perfecting the darker arts of centre-forward play, and he left his mark on Stearman and

Preston NE 0 Wolves 0

Edwards with the challenges that forced both off.

Somehow escaping a booking, Davies also made his presence felt on Danny Bath, the man charged with marking the former England international, but at least the Brierley Hill-born stopper was able to stay on the pitch unscathed.

After failing to keep a clean sheet in pre-season, it was reassuring to see Wolves shut the opposition out, especially given the difficulties they endured on the day.

Bath played a full part in that achievement and was just shaded for the man of the match award by Ricketts playing against his former Bolton team-mate.

Wolves had the edge in the first half before Preston bossed the second. But even before the injuries, there was a feeling that Wolves need more quality before the transfer window shuts.

Already a team 'work in progress' stamped on it, the injuries appear to have left Jackett with little choice but to shuffle his pack just when he was looking for his new-look team to settle down.

And the jury is out as to whether the options are within the squad to cope.



Richard Stearman hobbles off at Deepdale



Leigh Griffiths of Wolves and Bailey Wright of Preston



Dave Edwards down after a challenge from Kevin Davies



Bakary Sako chased by Preston's Tom Clarke

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